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CHRIST'S TABLE TALK

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CHRIST'S TABLE TALK

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CHRIST'S TABLE TALK

A STUDY IN THE METHOD OF OUR LORD

BY

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One of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South

"BLESSED IS HE THAT SHALL EAT BREAD IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

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To

Nathan Scarritt and Helen Chick,

Our remaining Children under our Rooftree, whose deep interest in Christ's Table Talk has made our own Table Talk at "Right Kulm" most helpful,

This book is affectionately Dedicated.

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FOREWORD

THE hunger of the world is for a companionable Deity, as in Eden. In its original conception, sacrifice was a common meal with the Deity. God's portion was either placed apart, as originally, when he was supposed to be near, or burned so as to ascend to him in heaven. The shewbread was not only a perpetual offering from Israel to Jehovah, it also represented the royal table spread for guests, and symbolized Jehovah's continual bounty to Israel. The virtue of hospitality so highly esteemed among men must not be wanting in God. The place of the sheikh's tent was always nearest the most traveled way, and *there* was found "the guest chamber" for the stranger. The good sheikh was known as "the man of much ashes," because the fires of hospitality were never allowed to go out. The stranger might be an angel unawares, such as came from Jehovah to Abraham's tent. To see God and to eat and drink was the early notion of worship. It was a long step downward when sacrifice in various parts of the world

passed from an act of communion to an act of commerce or barter, in which something valuable is given up or destroyed in order to secure some gain. No priest was necessary to Manoah or Gideon when they made their sacrifices unto God as if to commune the more closely with him. There were great acts of propitiation which all needed to have part in, but these were not the daily sacrifices which were sacramental as they were marked by fellowship.

Doubtless the reason which many early Christians had for refusing to eat meat which had been offered to idols was the sacramental conception of the sacrifice as of a blood bond with the Deity. They were afraid of entering into a mysterious but real relation with demons, of becoming their "fellows," and thus submitting soul and body to their influence. The very word "sacrifice" is used by the Arabs to-day of the animal that is slain to provide food for a guest. Thus eating together was really a sacred act. By it men became "brothers of the bread." In becoming the "*companion*" of men, our Lord literally became "a sharer of bread." Thus a new meaning attaches to the large space given in the Gospels to the times when our Lord sat at

meat with his disciples and others. These were the occasions of his wonderful table talks which marked every great crisis in his ministry, including the greatest of all in the upper room. The most sacred sacrament was the Lord's Supper, of which none were permitted to partake if moral conditions were wanting. Only those truly partake in it who can discern the Lord's body, the living Bread sent down from heaven. The blood bond is established at the table of the Lord between the disciple and his Lord. There we become "brothers of the bread," and our truest fellowship with one another is possible because of fellowship with Christ. One can dwell even in a small tent with Jacob, if Jacob is in fellowship with God.

It adds much to clear thinking of Christ's method to remember that the Christian community was in origin a house-congregation. The church in the house was usually a number of house-congregations such as gathered in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. The close fellowship developed was intensified by "the breaking of bread and of prayers" such as always marked the early worship. Phillips Brooks happily says: "The church spire is nothing after all

but the elevated and prolonged house roof. And so the battlemented city wall is but the enlargement and solidification of the simple fence that inclosed the family homestead." Christian fellowship must grow to take in all mankind, like dying Whittier, who said, "Give my love to the world." Lord Shaftesbury wrought constantly at the great task of the true religion, namely, such a definition of man as should take in the downmost of men. The very prodigal's return must be the joy of the elder brother, if he be a true son of the loving Father. There were those in our Lord's time who thought they alone were the sinless sons; but they were found on the outside when the door was shut, while the returned prodigal, clothed and in his right mind, sat at meat with his father. We dare not disfellowship our brother whom God forgives.

"The *words* that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life," said Jesus. These were words which for the most part Christ spoke in conversation. We can spare any of Christ's words better than we can spare his table talk, when he spoke his greatest parables and showed us the Father. Not to know Christ in the breaking of bread, whether before or after his resur-

rection, is to be unfurnished as a witness of his true glory. To lodge in our hearts the words which the Father had given him was his life mission, and not until he had chosen the best times and places to give these words, and not until he knew that they had been received by his disciples who were now prepared to give them to the world, was Christ able to say, "Father, the hour is come." The richest legacy of these divine words was given at the table of the Lord the same night that he was betrayed.

Once more, before they were ready for their great life work as witnesses, the disciples were to share the fellowship of the common meal and to be refreshed by his matchless words at the table, even after Christ's resurrection. Religion needed to be domesticated once more by our Lord's appearance to his disciples as they sat at meat, whether at Emmaus, or in Jerusalem, or by "sweet Galilee." It was not something that belonged alone to another world, but our Lord had become incarnate to give it a domicile here. "The tabernacle of the Lord is with men." The true Shekinah is the Holy Ghost dwelling in man as He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. Thus alone can we become

his witnesses whom the Father sent into the world. "Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; not unto all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did *eat and drink with him* after he rose from the dead." Ours is the living bread because they broke it to us.

"Freely as ye have received, so give,"
Bade He who hath given us all.
How can the soul in us longer live
Deaf to their starving call
For whom the blood of the Lord was shed,
And his body broken to give them bread,
If we eat our morsel alone?

NORLEDGE PLACE, KANSAS CITY, MO.

I

JESUS, THE GREATEST OF TABLE TALKERS

What the Chorus was in ancient drama the preacher is called to be in the theater of life, the witness of the permanent among the perishing.—*Boyd Carpenter.*

Break thou the bread of life,
Dear Lord, to me,
As thou didst break the loaves
Beside the sea.

Break thou the truth, dear Lord,
To me, to me,
As thou didst bless the bread
By Galilee. —*Mary A. Lathbury.*

I

JESUS, THE GREATEST OF TABLE TALKERS

"WHILE eating he did not converse," is the picture of Confucius by his disciples. If correct, it makes him a religionist of the John the Baptist type, who came neither eating nor drinking. It is the ascetic idea of religion as unsocial and where seriousness is possible only by separation. Not the table, but the desert, is friendly to devotion. Jesus reversed all this conception of a religious life by coming "eating and drinking." John the Baptist was never a guest, would possibly have scorned any invitation that took him away from his desert fare of locusts and wild honey. Jesus not only accepted all invitations to dine, but was sometimes a self-invited guest. He gladly "took his place in the very center of that world where seriousness is usually lost amid a congenial company at the table, and found and taught there the true solemnity of living." When Christ sat at the table, a window always opened heavenward and the com-

pany got glimpses of what he called "my Father's house." Christ's miracles and ministry began and ended at the table, with the water made wine at Cana and the breakfast on the Galilean shore begun on a fish taken in no human net, ere our Lord said to his wondering disciples, "Now bring of the fish which ye have caught," the miraculous catch made at his command. His breaking of bread in the upper room at Jerusalem, followed by his divine table talk, when his disciples scarce knew when he had ceased to talk to them and was talking to his Father, made so deep an impression that the two at Emmaus knew him after his resurrection by the same unmistakable sign and speech, as he opened unto them the Scriptures. The promise and vision of the Father's house are given in the assurance, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." The marriage supper of the Lamb is where we shall sup with him and he with us. Heaven itself is not complete without the table talk of our Lord.

All this shows human society at its best, the individual made worthy of the highest privilege

of fellowship, the prodigal clothed upon with the best robe and back in the Father's house, and the plenty of heaven taking the place of the scant supply of the ground cursed for man's sake. It shows the race not in its childhood where men ate alone and in silence, the chief thought being the mere gratification of appetite, but in its maturity where the feast is at once social and intellectual and spiritual. So does Christ make all things new, and show that the true perfection of man is not found in diminution, but in completion; not in the loss of capacity for enjoyment, but in the realization of every power of being.

The savage eats alone because he has nothing to say. Why expect table talk from one who has no sympathy with his kind, no thoughts to share, no exchange of ideas? Can we expect the table to be a clearing house where there is no currency, no medium of exchange, where speech is scant because ideas are few? The savage munches his bone in silence save as the crunching is broken by some cry of ange at being interrupted in his gluttonous meal, as he simply eats to live. Man is already well advanced in civilization when he talks while he

eats. What he then eats is not simply what he has winged with his arrow or taken in his trap, but what he has chosen from his flocks or gathered from his fields. The predatory life has given place to the care of the flocks and the cultivation of the soil. The vagrant has become fixed on some verdant hills or in some fertile valleys. He has interests in common with others as he watches his flocks or tills the fields. The very change in his diet changes his manner of life. He now becomes what he eats. The song of the shepherd is answered by the song of the reaper. Men that have songs in common have interests in common that they love to talk about. Cereals are indeed gifts of the gods in helping to civilize men, bidding them sow in confidence that the earth will yield her increase, anchoring them to the soil in the knowledge that the harvest awaits them, in which the women and children are permitted to glean after the reapers, and then share the common meal which all have helped to make possible. How sympathy in toil makes speech possible at the table! No longer is the theme that of the cannibal as he devours his victim, but the Lord of the fields who giveth seedtime and harvest, the story of

the earth's increase, or the plans for larger harvests another year, and larger barns and better facilities of exchange. The merchant now follows the tiller of the soil, and the corn-ships which he sends out bring back the teas and spices of other lands whose peoples, no less than their products, furnish new themes for his table. There is a commerce of ideas no less than of products of the soil or of the loom. Man's table talk tells with rare accuracy the measure of his civilization or enlightenment. He is well advanced when he abandons his cannibal tendencies to discuss his enemies at the table and begins to talk of things, and he has become a thinker when he talks more of ideas than of things. He is at his best when he is fitted to enjoy and to share such table talk as our Lord gave in his dinner parables or at the Last Supper. As he eats the broken loaf and drinks the crushed cluster which tell him of the great sacrifice, and discerns his Lord's body, he is getting robed for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Now nothing next to the very passion of our Lord has so brought about this change in our humanity as his intimate personal contact with men as he was alternately their host and their

guest. What tables Christ spread for men as he fed now five thousand and now four thousand in the wilderness, and what access did he get to the hearts of the fishermen-apostles as he told them where to cast their nets and then ate with them on the shore or in their homes! What new meaning had life to Zaccheus after our Lord was once his guest and drew the curtains of the kingdom of heaven in his table talk! What new views of both earth and heaven did Christ give men in his parables of the Great Supper and the Wedding Garment which he spake as he reclined at meat! Who could ever forget the parable of the Two Debtors which he spake in the house of Simon the loveless as the weeping woman bathed his feet with her tears as he talked and ate, the crumbs of his conversation being to her as angels' food? What table manners have been taught by the selfish guests seeking the best places at the feast, and what unselfish motives in the invitations which do not look to being invited in turn! But above all, what new meaning is given to life when at the Last Supper we learn that our true life is found in participation in His life who gave us his flesh and his blood! Our Lord's greatest gift to men

was not his Sermon on the Mount, as some have thought, but himself, as taught in the symbolism and talk of the Last Supper. By this he wished to be remembered as he said, "Do this in remembrance of me." This is at once monumental, symbolical, and commemorative. If his table talk on the night that he was betrayed is remembered, his followers will ever be the salt of the earth. What words were his which made such saints as Mary of Bethany and John the beloved disciple! John's Gospel is fitly called "The Gospel of the Conversations." And the heart of John's Gospel is Christ's table talk. It was not a fast but a feast that Jesus instituted to be remembered by. Well do we call it the Holy Eucharist.

Our Lord taught the sacrament of hospitality. Among the Orientals there are no doors to lock in the tents. The life is freer. Travelers are the only bearers of tidings from the outside world, and they are welcome and their safety guarded even in the presence of their enemies. Given to hospitality was a Christian grace, especially as that hospitality was extended to strangers who were often God's messengers, very angels unawares who brought messages to "the

church in the house," and sometimes carried the parchment of a gospel or an epistle. In many a humble refectory have been rehearsed the sayings which shall never pass away as the angels of the churches have given and received the "Godspeed." Our risen Lord is continually made known in the breaking of bread, as his disciples remember the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. His presence is always sure when he himself is the theme. "Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked with us in the way?" His golden words are the currency of Christendom. The coinage of his lips has given not only new commandments but new speech to the world. The seat kept for Elijah at the table of many a son of Abraham has been filled by the Christ whose day Abraham rejoiced to see and saw it and was glad.

Where should Christ be more expected and more welcome than in the home which he, the homeless one, delighted to visit and bless? And where in the home would his presence be more grateful than at the table to bless the interchange of observations and thoughts and experiences which make the family life so sacred just before the holy page is read and the family prayer bears

up to heaven the united petitions of the household? Does not our life need sweetening at its very center where Christ purified and sweetened it by his talk in the home, and especially at the table?

Human speech is the "glory" of man. It was what the Psalmist invoked wherewith to bless God, and whose best and most natural expression is often found at the table. (Not our Lord's formal Sermon on the Mount has so influenced the lives of men as his talk over a cup of water at the mouth of a well, or his talk with his disciples by the seaside or on the hillside, or in many a private home as he sat at meat.) Did not our Lord, who gave himself to be the bread of life, associate himself purposely with the meal hour so that his memorable words might become our food as we sit at meat? "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." How significant that after giving his last and greatest table talk in the guest room where he ate the Passover with his disciples, Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "For the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them." Christ's words could never be dissociated from the table where they were spoken.

Now the meal hour measures terrestrial time no less than the sun and moon measure celestial time. The necessary meal taken to satisfy hunger helps to divide the day as the sun and moon divide the day and night. We reckon events not only by sunrise and sunset, but by "before dinner" and "after supper." Nor is it for a mere physical reason that the meal has such importance, but for social and intellectual and even spiritual reasons. In the grouping of congenial souls around the board there is found far more than in the *menu* provided by the host. Such a meal is a "contribution feast," where every guest contributes something—now a wise maxim, now a significant fact, now a personal experience, now a pleasant story; and then comes the brightening and sharpening of mind in freest interchange of opinion. Was it not thus that Socrates taught true knowledge by first discovering how little both he and others knew? Did not Luther's table talk shake all Europe into a passion for religious freedom? Did not Samuel Johnson's table talk with men like Burke and Sir Joshua Reynolds and Goldsmith help to found a "great school of truthfulness and accuracy" which has profoundly impressed both life and literature?

That famous company of young men and able writers, all under thirty-two, the founders of the *Edinburgh Review*, "cultivated literature on a little oatmeal," and determined in table talk the fate of many a book which the printed page but simply declared. Of all that Coleridge spoke and wrote what is comparable to his "Table Talk" for its condensed philosophy and glow of mind? All these masters of speech were leaders of thought as well. Nor did one of them disdain religion, as he understood it, as the greatest of his themes. Of them all Socrates alone had not sat at the feet of Christ, the greatest table talker in history. When the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, his speech was to be so mingled with ours as to change the very language of men. If it be true that "the true history of religion is neither more nor less than an account of the various attempts at expressing the Inexpressible," then "the history of religion is the history of language." Christ maketh all things new by his words with which human speech is leavened. It was not the larger audience for which he saved anything. He planted his words of life in any receptive ear, in the confidence that the tongue of fire would tell it in all the world.

Is not conversation, like letter-writing, fast becoming a lost art? In our mechanical and metallic age, where we dictate to stenographers and typewriters and talk over "the wire," are we not becoming unfamiliar with the finest accents of the human voice? Is not this reacting upon thought itself, which is but speaking low while speech is thinking aloud? Is it not becoming noticeable in society that there is a diminishing use of speech, the social evening demanding the use of the hands and feet in cards and dance because the tongue can no longer be trusted to contribute its share of bright, entertaining speech? Can "the after-dinner speech" ever substitute such general conversation as was the glory of the *salon* in France, and which helped to enrich and mold the French language so that its glory to-day is that "if it is not clear it is not French"? Can this generation develop such masters of expression as former generations did when conversation was still a living art? In winning a heart, how the soul longs for one or both of these lost arts!

The art of conversation can be recovered at the table where the flow of gastric juice and of ideas has so close a relation. Hannah More

said, "The two great evils in the world are Sin and Bile." Good digestion helps to make good and wholesome speech. De Quincey said "Macaulay was of the favored few to draw a double prize of a fine intellect and a healthy stomach." Should not the table become the clearing house where we bring for exchange our observations, our experience, our best and most genial ideas, saving for the table a choice story as the hostess saves the choicest the market affords for the *menu?* If Augustine made it the rule of his table that no absent person should be discussed while the meal was in progress, can we not get over the cannibal habit of having "cold clergyman" for Sunday dinner, teaching by example that conversation has become civilized and even enlightened, and delights in things and thoughts more than in persons? It was said of Butler, the author of "Hudibras," that he was like a ninepin, little at both ends and large in the middle, because he was dull at both ends of the meal, before and after the wine, and lively only at the middle. The best talk is that which is not dependent on the fare so much as on the company, and which survives the dinner hour, and even the age in which it was spoken. The best con-

versation is that which comes from fullness of information, from a sympathetic heart, from interest in the individual which puts one at ease both as listener and talker, from one who has a mission rather than a fad, whose life-purpose is large enough to float a life, and large enough to float many lives. All this, and more, had Jesus the incomparable table talker.

II

THE DINNER PARABLES

The virtues were invited once
To banquet with the Lord of all;
They came—the great ones rather grim
And not so pleasant as the small.

They talked and chatted o'er the meal,
They even laughed with temp'rate glee;
And each one knew the other well,
And all were good as good could be.

Benevolence and Gratitude
Alone of all seemed strangers yet;
They stared when they were introduced—
On earth they never once had met.

—*Turgenief.*

The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his,
And he is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow,
My ransomed soul he leadeth,
And where the verdant pastures grow,
With food celestial feedeth.

—*Henry W. Baker.*

A favorite with the late Archbishop Temple.

II

THE DINNER PARABLES

Our Lord was the incomparable master of speech in the use of the parable. None of the apostles after him attempted in sermon or epistle to make or to use a parable. Only Nathan, in his story of the Ewe Lamb, and Isaiah, in his Song of the Shepherd, approach Christ in this beautiful and powerful mode of teaching; and these two instances are well-nigh alone in the Old Testament. Nor does any apocryphal gospel attempt to give a new parable, possibly because it was a hopeless effort to try to imitate the Great Teacher. Even John's Gospel, although giving the charming allegories of the True Vine and of the Good Shepherd, records no parable of Christ. How rich indeed must have been Christ's table talk when, without reciting a single parable, one-third of the Gospel of John is given to the record of a single evening's talk when our Lord instituted the Last Supper.

Thus of the thirty to thirty-five parables John

records none, and Mark but nine, one being that of the Seed Growing Secretly. Matthew gives us twenty-one, largely didactic, eleven of them being peculiar to his Gospel. Luke, who gives more than two-thirds of the whole, has eighteen not found elsewhere, and their characteristic is the evangelistic note. Luke, who has been well called "The Evangelist of Philanthropy," preserves for us twelve that may be called "Dinner Parables." These were given either during or immediately following the meal, or are full of the imagery of the customs and speech of the table, such as the Friend at Midnight, the Faithful Servants Rewarded as the Master bids them to sit down to meat while he himself serves them, and others. All these are distinct from Christ's conversations in the homes of Matthew and of Zaccheus, and of the two homes in Bethany, or over a cup of water at Jacob's well, and show the wonderful richness of Christ's table talk.

The dinner parable at the table of Simon the Pharisee was that of the Two Debtors, when a loveless and discourteous host was taught a memorable lesson by a gentle but self-respecting guest. While curiosity to meet so renowned a Teacher doubtless influenced Simon's invitation,

what was the motive that withheld the customary guest rights from Jesus? There was no water for his feet, and no kiss of greeting was imprinted on the cheek. Was the slight intentional, or due to indifference to his guest? Why should a Pharisee, usually so punctilious in matters of form, be so remiss in his treatment of a guest whom he had invited many to meet at his table? It is possible for one whose god is "good form" so to worship the letter of etiquette as to be wanting in real heartiness and sympathy even at one's own table. Indifference to a guest cannot be hidden under the forms of hospitality, and may sometimes lead to the omission even of those forms. Only love is the fulfilling of the law, even the law of hospitality, as Simon was taught. That is a loveless and selfish heart when even its desire to maintain a reputation for all the graces of hospitality is overcome in a discourteous host, for hospitality is the virtue of the lands of the East. Lovelessness and hypocrisy, the two sins which Christ most hated, stand exposed here. Of the two sinners at Simon's table, which is the worse—the one overcome by sins of passion, or the other mastered by sins of temper? As in the parable usually called the Prodigal Son, but

more fittingly "the Loving Father," the sins of passion are forgiven while the sins of temper are both unrepented of and unpardoned. None but a loveless soul could fail to rejoice over the welcome to either the erring daughter or the erring son as they come to themselves and come home. But Simon's loveless bearing toward Christ and toward the woman who came to weep and to pray was the same. It came from a cold heart, lacking in love to both God and man.

A nameless woman appears in the open court where she, with others, can hear the table talk of Jesus. She buried her real name with her first act of shame. Can she be the adulteress once brought to Christ to see if he would revive the long unenforced law requiring that such a one be stoned, only, when there was no one without sin among her accusers to cast the first stone, to be dismissed with, "Woman, go and sin no more"? This may be that knowledge on her part of the loving Lord who had opened to her the first "door of hope." It was love even more than penitence that now brought her to Simon's house, where she knew that Jesus reclined at meat. Her impulsive nature, which had doubtless helped to lead her astray, shows itself anew

as, with the first glimpse of the dusty feet of Jesus, she bursts into tears. The hot tears fall upon the hot and weary feet for which Simon had provided no cooling water. She had not come to weep, but to anoint his feet, and she had brought an alabaster cruse of ointment for that purpose. It was not the costly spikenard that Mary, the sister of Lazarus, had brought to anoint the head of Jesus for his burial when he reclined at meat in the house of Simon of Bethany. Possibly such costly ointment was beyond her reach, or she would have brought even that for the feet of Jesus, for she did not presume to anoint his head. Warm as are her tears, her love is warmer still; and she loosens her tresses, and with a towel woven in no loom of man she begins to wipe his feet, kissing them again and again as she stoops over them. Then she anoints them in silence, broken only by her sobs of gratitude and love.

No mere Rabbi would have permitted such a woman to touch him, nor would he have even spoken to her. Even a prophet would have forbidden such an act of homage, not to say worship, as she kissed his feet. How could Jesus permit it? Surely he was not a prophet, or "he

would have known what manner of woman" she was. So reasoned Simon, losing sight of the individual in the class, as the heartless usually do. What was one sobbing woman to the whole set of outcasts to which she belonged? Christ discovered the individual even in the class, and knew that some one touched him, and that virtue had gone out of him to heal the soul, as well as when the chronic invalid of twelve years drew virtue from the touch of the hem of his garment. It needed neither the tears nor the ointment to make known her love, a love that must make itself known because she loved so much. "Simon, I know what you are thinking, and I have somewhat to say unto thee. A certain lender had two debtors: the one owed him five hundred shillings, and the other fifty. Neither having wherewith to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Which of them therefore would love him most?" Simon is having dropped in his heart a seed, under whose brown covering is a germ of life that will be growing long after the Master's voice is silent. Simon may forget the singer, he cannot forget the song. The dinner parable will be remembered long after the dinner is forgotten. He will remember, too, his

own prompt and truthful reply: "He to whom he forgave most, I suppose." Could he ever forget what followed? "Simon, there is no love in your heart toward me to prompt even the customary, though not necessary, courtesy toward a guest. This woman has known my power on earth to forgive sins, and she loves much because she has had much forgiven." And to the woman Christ said before all the dinner guests: "Thy sins are forgiven thee. Thy faith hath saved thee. Go into peace." A life of peace awaits the forgiven soul. Her tears were her food as she wept for very joy and peace.

"She sat and wept, and with her untressed hair
Still wiped the feet she was so blest to touch;
And he wiped off the soiling of despair
From her sweet soul, because she loved so much.
I am a sinner, full of doubts and fears;
Make me a humble thing of love and tears."

"Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb." Our Lord had won from Simon's table a guest for his own; but it was not Simon. The Lord's guests are only those who can sing "unto Him that loosed us from our sins." Rejoice, for I have found my sheep that was gone astray. Had not a table

been provided in the very presence of her enemies?

"Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," do you say? Possibly there was scarce a dinner during our Lord's life on earth, and long before and after, when there was not some guest who uttered this pious sentiment. It was as much a part of the dinner as what we call "the grace" or "blessing" is of ours. It was as often uttered as a matter of good form and with as little heartfelt gratitude. Who ever determined, in consequence of saying it, to become a guest who should break bread in the kingdom of God? Our Lord had won a guest for his table whom Simon would have rejected from his. Could he win another from among the guests who sat with him, jostling one another in their eagerness for the best places at the dinner at the table of one of the rulers of the Pharisees in the metropolis itself? It was on the Sabbath and at a cold dinner, as usual; but the table was not wanting in guests, but they were guests of quality. They did not need to know that Jesus was to be a guest to lead them to accept the invitation. The Sabbath dinner was, as now, a great event; and although they

complained, doubtless, of the tax imposed of giving and accepting invitations, meeting always the same persons and of the same social set, yet none was brave enough to break the tyranny of social custom. What shallow soil in which to sow seed! Yet our Lord sowed beside all waters.

The ruler of the Pharisees, despite the selfish guests at his table, showed no discourtesy to one who was his chief guest; and despite, too, the social position of the rest who needed to be of the first rank to be able to exchange hospitality with the ruler, was, even as much as Nicodemus, to give occasion for wonderful disclosures of the nature of the kingdom from the King himself. From his invitation and the company who accepted it with Christ, and from their conduct then and their speech afterwards, as they saw the publicans and sinners gather around one who had been their fellow-guest, resulted not less than ten of what may be fitly called the Dinner Parables of Christ as given by Luke in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters. His *argumentum ad hominem,* as he healed the man sick with the dropsy on that Sabbath day and in the presence of all the company, had given him strange command of the situation, as he had appealed to the

best that was in them. "Which of you shall have a son [as many ancient authorities read] or an ox fallen into a well, will you not straightway draw him up on the Sabbath?" There would not be a moment of delay. Then came a series of questions in the form of parables, which also left them dumb. Is it right to choose out the chief seats at the table, rather than to let the host invite from a lower seat to one of higher rank as he may see fit to place his guests? Is that true hospitality which invites only those of one's own set, and in the expectation of being invited in turn by one's own friends or brethren, or kinsmen or rich neighbors? Is not that rather the death of hospitality which limits one's views of life simply to this world and to the advantages of a purely personal sort, not trusting God to recompense for hospitality extended to the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind? The silence is broken by a pious platitude, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Will that change the subject of conversation which, despite its parabolic form, awakens a sense of disquietude as conscience condemns also?

Closer yet is the approach made to the disquieted guests as Christ at once invites them to

break bread in the kingdom of God. The blessing that they had just spoken of was at hand, extended by a fellow-guest. Would they seek a chief seat near the host as Judas was to do, with his hand in the dish, showing in that act the selfishness that not only upsets the salt, as Leonardo paints him, ill omen of broken covenants, but, under pretense of greatest loyalty, conceal the purpose of betrayal? Would they be repelled from pressing to the King's table because the poor and the maimed were there, and the lame and the blind? What excuses were they already framing to keep them from the feast which the King had prepared? In his great dinner parable of the Great Supper our Lord paints the portraits of some of his fellow-guests in the hope that they might yet be won to break bread with him in the kingdom of God, for which blessed privilege they were sighing. Not only was a Great Supper prepared and invitations widely extended, but when the time came servants were sent to remind the guests and to say, "Come; for all things are now ready." Some beg to be excused because of business interests which must be looked after, newly purchased land or oxen to be further inspected. Another does

not even ask to be excused, but, as if it were a bit of impertinence to even remind him of his engagement, says: "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." Are there, then, none who really wish to break bread in the kingdom of God? Surely none of those already invited care to come, nor shall they be invited again. The streets and lanes of the city shall furnish the guests; and when they are all in, the highways and hedges shall furnish more for this generous feast, until the table shall be filled with guests. Many can hardly believe that they are invited, so amazing is the condescension of the host, but none refuse the invitation with empty excuses or none at all. Were any guests won for the King's table from among those that sat at meat with him? Was Nicodemus present, another ruler of the Jews, or Joseph of Arimathea, or some of the three thousand who on the day of Pentecost pressed into the kingdom of God?

None can say whether any guest from the company was won for the Great Supper; but as Christ left the Pharisee's house, a great company followed him, many of whom had doubtless heard while in the court the parable of the

Great Supper, and were inclined to accept the invitation. Christ would strengthen that desire and turn it into an unfaltering purpose by the parable of the Unfinished Tower, or of the Deprecated War, as he walks away from the table of the Pharisee. Some of his late fellow-guests are struck with the growing crowds that gather about him as he walks, many of them publicans and sinners. The old reproach is taken up by the Pharisees and scribes, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." Then followed that necklace of parables suggested by the dinner talk and the self-satisfied guests, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son. Again the lost are all sought until they are found, and again the table is filled with guests. But while the prodigal and lost son has a chief place at the table, the ungrateful son, bad of temper even though his life be cleaner than his brother who had fallen the slave of his passions —the ungrateful son is not found at the table where the weeping wanderer is sobbing out his joy. What more striking Dinner Parable than this, which shows the door shut and who are on the inside and who on the outside?

In that same wonderful group, and uttered at

the same time as his own disciples join the Master, is the parable of the Steward who made provision against a future day and made friends to receive him into their houses when he should have none of his own. The only commendable thing was his foresight, not his methods—a foresight that the Lord at once shows Dives did not have when he was clothed in purple and fine linen and was faring sumptuously every day. Better far was Lazarus who picked up the crumbs from the rich man's table, but whom the angels recognized as a willing and grateful guest, and when last seen is reclining at the marriage supper, even in Abraham's bosom. With him shall be found the Good Samaritan, whose beautiful story our Lord told just before he reached the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus for his own needed refreshment and rest. Nor was there ever a dinner where he was a guest which did not give new meaning to the too formal beatitude, "Blessed is he that shall break bread in the kingdom of God." He was gathering guests for the Last Supper as well as for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. But in his greatest table talk at the Last Supper he was to speak without a parable.

III

AN AFTER-DINNER TALK, THE WATER-SHED OF THE GOSPEL

It is easy in the crowd to live the life of the crowd. It is easy in solitude to live your own life. But he is the great man who, in the midst of the crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.—*Emerson.*

O Jesus, thou art knocking:
  And lo! thy hand is scarred,
And thorns thy brow encircle,
  And tears thy face have marred.
O love that passeth knowledge,
  So patiently to wait!
O sin that hath no equal,
  So fast to bar the gate!

—*William W. How.*

III

AN AFTER-DINNER TALK, THE WATERSHED OF THE GOSPEL

THE watershed of the gospel is found in John's account of the feeding of the five thousand and the conversation that followed. Here the currents set definitely toward Christ and away from him. His fan is in his hand in that memorable after-dinner talk, and the chaff is separated from the wheat. It is an old man's account, as given in that sixth chapter of John. Like the talk of old men, there is a fullness of detail not given in the Synoptist Gospels. The disposition of Philip to solve the problem of how to feed such a multitude by giving them a little, a mere snack, as it were, and counting how much it would cost, is fully brought out. His talk with his intimate friend Andrew, with whom he always confers in an emergency, as when the Greeks came to him in Jerusalem and said, "Sir, we would see Jesus," is given in John's Gospel. Andrew sees nothing to begin on but a lunch basket containing five black barley loaves and two small

fishes, and gives up in despair with, "But what are they among so many?" While even a lunch is beyond the possible resources of the apostles, our Lord provides for an ample and leisurely *dinner* as he bids the multitude be seated in companies of fifty on the grass. No haste is required to cover up the scant supply. As at the wedding feast in Cana, all sense of want disappears. The abundant supply is best judged by the fragments which fill twelve baskets. It was the King's table, where there could be no suggestion of want.

Two crowds united to make up the five thousand guests of Christ as he spread this table in the wilderness. We find, after examining all the four accounts, that while many followed Jesus, going around the upper part of the Sea of Gennesaret, another large company was found there on their way to the Passover Feast at Jerusalem. After this miraculous feast where Christ was host, there was doubtless revived in the breasts of all the expectation of the return of the manna with the coming of the Messiah. This was their interpretation of the Psalmist's words, "There shall be abundance of grain in the earth upon the top of the mountains." The

Messiah was to be a Bread-King. Christ, who read the thoughts of men and saw how the people were minded to come and take him by force and make him king, withdrew again into the mountain, himself alone. He had not come to be the King of the Jews, despite the fact that such was the title given him by the wise men at his birth and by Pilate at his death. He will wear that title yet, but it will be the last one, after the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in. To have become King of the Jews then would have been simply taking rank with the many false Messiahs who were ever breeding discontent against the Roman yoke. Christ even separated himself from his disciples, and in this new temptation, as in those in the wilderness, he trod the wine press alone. The boats which brought the disciples back across the sea did not bear Jesus, and the perplexed multitudes knew not where he was. But his disciples needed him in the storm that arose, and he left his place of prayer in the mountain that he might strengthen the faith of his own in the furious storm that arose as they toiled in rowing, making no headway against the wind and waves. He was to show that the Christ could rule on the water as well as on the land.

The conversation among themselves concerning such a Bread-King had not ceased for a moment with the multitude since the miracle of the loaves and fishes. As many as could get boats came to him over the sea, as much amazed that he could have crossed without a boat as that he could have fed multitudes without any visible supply. What manner of man was this, when even the winds and the sea obey him? They are the more eager to renew their efforts to make him king, provided Christ will continue such miracles as filled them with food, until Christ calls up afresh the table in the wilderness and says, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracle, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled." The spiritual lesson of the miracle had been lost on them, that spiritual lesson of every miracle that *always shows a person beyond the phenomenon.* Christ could not make disciples out of men who simply sought the loaves, to whom the kingdom meant meat and drink. Then came that great after-dinner talk in which he explains the nature of the bread of God, the living bread that came down from heaven. They are taught, as was Satan in the wilderness, that it is written that man shall not

live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

The bread from heaven such as their fathers had eaten was in some large sense sacramental, for that bread was Christ just as he was also the Rock that followed them. In each case it was God's special gift of love to meet a grave emergency and need. Both water and bread are much spoken of in Syria as "the gift of God." The Greeks attributed all cereals to Ceres, the goddess who gave them to men, first teaching Triptolemus, a favorite among mortals, how to cultivate them and to distribute them over the earth. In their use men always reach a higher order of civilization than when dependent on roots and mosses and lichens, or on the chase, for their food. They can now have greater assurance of plenty. They sow in confidence that they shall also reap, and reap largely in excess of their sowing. The earth becomes a silent partner with the farmer as he claims a part of it for his own and cultivates it, building there his home and his barns. He knows that the corn that he has must be put in the ground or his supply will cease. Once every twelve months he is within three or four months of famine so far as his

actual food supply goes, but he confidently looks to the earth, which he is trusting with his precious seed, to yield her increase. Yet he daily prays, "Give us this day our daily bread," as the earth yields only one harvest at a time. And yet man's corn can be exported to other lands in the confidence that year by year seedtime and harvest shall not fail. The ideal earth is not peopled with a race that is manna-fed, but grain-fed. God does not pauperize man by giving him his food supplies without man's coöperation in sowing and tilling and reaping. Every year is repeated the miracle of the loaves as the Father in heaven multiplies the seed corn into bountiful harvests. The seed in the lunch basket is ever being multiplied into loaves for the five thousand. If the earth were hollowed out and made into one vast granary, the continued harvests from one bushel of grain yielding thirty-fold would in twenty years fill it, not a hundred or even a thousand or even a million times, but 10,995,989 times, and enough be left over to supply the world with grain for many millions of years. "Much more your heavenly Father feedeth you" than the birds that without barns or storehouse are fed. He would feed our souls no less than

our bodies by bidding us trust him and work together with him for our daily bread, which all comes from his hand. Those who did not see that it was God rather than Moses who had given the manna in the wilderness would, as in this case of the feeding of the five thousand, think more of the loaves than of the divine hand whence they came. Man, "the creature with the upturned eye," as the Greeks called him, may fix his eye on the ground rather than on the Giver of all good. His daily bread with its sacramental lessons may feed only his body and not his soul, as he lives to eat rather than eats to live.

Can Christ lift their thoughts to something above their food supply when they are so unmindful of the Father as the true Giver? Is there nothing more to life than the care of the body? "The bread of life is that which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world." As when Christ told the woman at Jacob's well of water which he could give that would become a fountain springing up unto everlasting life, she instantly said, "Sir, give me this water," so the multitude now say, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." There is a consciousness of recurring

want, if not of a deeper need than can be met by food or drink. Can they be awakened to the need of the soul and realize its unsatisfied spiritual hunger? Has Christ, the bread of life, simply come to relieve hunger by multiplying loaves? He tells of his coming to save men's souls, and not merely to feed their bodies, proclaiming the eternal life to all who come unto him. "I am the bread of life. This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down out of heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: yea, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." Instantly the question is raised on all sides, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" But the bread of God must be eaten before it can nourish us and become a part of us. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves."

This language is not to be connected with the Last Supper, for our Lord is not instituting a sacrament before his time. He is talking now not to his disciples, but to those of the curious multitude who ate of the loaves and were filled.

Was that all they were to get out of his ministry, only as much as if they were so many cattle that had been fed? Verily man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." When the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, it was that we might know him and appropriate him, that he might become part of our inmost life. The needs of the soul are even greater than the body's needs. Shall God provide for the one and not for the other? Our true life must be sustained from above, and so God has given us his Son that we might have eternal life, for he is the bread of life. He is the bread of life not simply as men eat the consecrated wafer and think that by some process of transubstantiation it becomes the flesh of Christ. That is the cannibal's idea as he eats the flesh of his foe and thinks that he thereby shares his courage and strength that defied him so stoutly in mortal combat, as if these were material things. The flesh profiteth nothing; it is the spirit that giveth life. Christ must become our very bread of life. But it is the words that he

has spoken that are spirit and are life. There *is a transfusion of blood into our depleted veins,* but it comes through his spirit dwelling within us. We are to be strengthened as we are fed, but we are strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith. Only by appropriating Christ in his divine nature and work does he become to us the bread of God.

The multitude were eager to follow the Bread-King, but there would have been no more religion in that than in the lowing herds following the farmer to their feeding place. Christ had not come merely to preserve life, he came to give life, and that life was in his flesh as he was to lay down his life for the world. Would men accept his miracles and not himself, his loaves for the body and not his offering of himself for the soul? Would they praise his works of civilization, abundance of food, good sanitation, a lowered death rate, wholesome laws, and ignore or deny the value of his vicarious death and the power of an endless life in his resurrection? Christ had not come to be the world's civilizer, but the world's Saviour. He sympathized with their hunger and relieved it, but he had come to

give them the bread of life, eternal life. He that eateth this bread shall live forever.

In this memorable after-dinner talk Christ taught that the world's malady was *malnutrition.* The bread of life was given, but it was not eaten. There was hunger for the loaves and fishes, but not for the words of life. The animal appetites were strong, but the spiritual appetites were weak. The body was nourished, but the soul was starving. Men were following their lower nature rather than their higher nature. Christ gave them the loaves that he might the better reach them with the bread of life. He ate with them that he might win them as he won Zaccheus for the kingdom of God. He must become their very life if he would give them eternal life. Nay, their eternal life began with their deeper knowledge of him, "for this is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." He called himself bread that they might be reminded of him in every broken loaf which they ate, nay in every grain of corn dropped into the ground to die that it might produce thirty, sixty, a hundred fold. He would become so intimate a part of their life that they could not sit at meat, but

that they would think of him who came the bread of God to be the life of the world.

What though he had eaten with them, if they did not eat of and assimilate his words? Of what avail a Teacher sent from God, if Nicodemus could not see him lifted up that whosoever believeth in him might have everlasting life? Men praised his kindly deeds and his wonderful words of authority so above the language of the scribes, but they did not build on them. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not is like a man who built his house upon the sand." Only he that heareth and doeth shall be saved. If any man *willeth* to do my will, he shall know of the doctrine. The proof of the teaching is in the life and experience. He that believeth hath the witness in himself. Does any one doubt whether bread is nutritious, he need but eat it. Does any one question whether Christ is the bread of life, let him but try to live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Son of God. But malnutrition that cannot assimilate Christ's teachings and life because of lack of spiritual desire is progressive death. The spiritual nature unfed becomes unreal. There is an atrophy of faculty with the failure to satisfy

it. There is not only malnutrition, there is perverted nutrition, as in the case of Judas Iscariot. What should go to build up healthy tissue is perverted to nourish some fibroid tumor. The cancer of a degenerate and destructive faith grows upon the food that was intended to nourish a living hope. Death is hastened by the very bread that should have prolonged life. In the use which they make of it men may exchange the truth of God for a lie, and so worship and serve the creature more than the Creator. Unless Christ be Lord of all, he cannot be Lord at all. Unless he is our bread of life, the corn of wheat fallen into the ground that it may bring forth more fruit, and then crushed and broken that it can be taken into our lives and assimilated, he can never give us eternal life.

Making Christ King is not making him Lord and Saviour. Praising him is not worshiping him. He wants not our patronage, but our love and service. Our rank, like his, is not determined by how many serve us, but how many we serve. Unless he be formed within the very hope of glory, we have no part in him. It is not enough that we have eaten and drunk in his presence, and that he has taught in our streets, unless we do the

things that he says. He has come to give us his very life. Will we consent that we cease to live that he may henceforth live in us, that the very life which we live we may live by faith on the Son of God who loved us and gave himself for us?

So said the disciples who clave unto him and believed. "Lord, thou hast the words of eternal life." By those words they were made clean. There was identity of life henceforth with his life. They knew how to abide in him and his words were to abide in them, and so they brought forth fruit and their fruit has remained. The experience of one generation makes possible the faith of the next. And so through successive generations we trace back our faith to those who made the confession of their faith on that notable day when all was in the balances, "We have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God."

IV

JESUS AS A GUEST

"Give unto all, lest he whom thou deniest may chance to be no other man than Christ."

"The conscious water saw its Lord and blushed."

Christ alone is a world of friends. That man never knew what it was to be familiar with God, who complains of the want of friends while God is with him. —*Thomas à Kempis.*

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

—*Phillips Brooks.*

IV

JESUS AS A GUEST

It was our Lord himself who preserved to us his reproach: "The Son of Man is come eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" (Matthew i. 19.) Reference is doubtless made to Christ's presence as guest at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, and at the feast in the home of Matthew, which was given just after he had left the receipt of custom to become a follower of Christ. Many of the guests whom Levi had invited were publicans and sinners. In each instance Christ manifested forth his glory, not only by the miracle that he wrought in turning the water into wine and the want into supply, but in his tender sympathy with man, whose common lot he had come to share. There is no more reason to charge Christ with being a winebibber than there was in charging him with being a gluttonous man. He was never the slave of his appetite for either food or drink. But he was ever considerate of human needs, whether due to hun-

ger or to sickness. He who asked, "Where shall we get bread for the multitude to eat?" having compassion on them, also, after his resurrection, asked of his disciples after their night of fruitless toil, "Children, have ye any meat?" Could He who fed the sparrows be indifferent to his hungry children?

It was at Matthew's feast, which took place while the Pharisees and John's disciples were fasting, that they asked Jesus why his disciples did not fast. John the Baptist was probably then a prisoner, which led to the fast of his disciples. Jesus said: "Can the sons of the bride chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? Is fasting becoming at a wedding? But the days shall come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day." Fasting, like any other religious exercise, must be from the heart and not a mere ceremonial observance. The Pharisees boasted that they fasted twice a week. It was not that they got any good from it, but that they got a *reputation for being good.* They fasted to be seen of men, and wore the badges of fasters the better to get the credit. "Verily, they had their reward." They were seen of men, but not approved of God—a

low motive easily satisfied, as are all low and unworthy aims.

Christ not only was the guest of a reformed publican like Levi—who would have his old associates know something of his new Master, as he had them at meat with him—but of a publican like Zaccheus, who was doing many things to reform himself, and with such little success that he was in danger of giving over all efforts to be a better man until Jesus consented to suffer in reputation by publicly announcing himself as his guest, in order that salvation might that very day come into his house. Men said, "This man is a sinner." Christ said, "He *also* is a son of Abraham." Christ saved Zaccheus by dining with him. He who came into the world to save sinners found many of them at the dinner table, where he told such a parable as that of the Great Supper. As of old on the holy mountain that burned with fire, "they saw God, and did eat and drink." Close indeed and ever memorable is that vision of God that comes as we eat. Christ came to make religion a part of common life.

Who is this strange Rabbi who accepts all invitations to dine? A certain Pharisee would make a closer study of him, and so asked Christ to dine

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with him; and he went in and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that he had not first bathed before dinner. It was not an ordinary ablution that was lacking—our Lord was too much of a gentleman for that—but it was a ceremonial ablution ("washing up to the elbows") that he had not observed. The Pharisees were as punctilious about coming in contact in the market place or on the street with persons who might be ceremonially unclean as the veriest slave of caste among the Hindoos to-day. Who knew but that somebody who had touched a corpse or brushed against a leper might have touched them, and might thus defile the food that they were about to eat? Nothing short of a ceremonial bath or ablution could save them from such pollution. Our Lord never spurned the touch of man or woman that needed his help. He could as cheerfully share the humble barley loaf with the poor man as the costliest viands at the rich man's table, so he could the better reach his host with the Father's message. He boldly declared that it is not that which goeth into a man that defileth him, but that which cometh out—his uncharitable speech, his vile insinuations, his solicitations to evil. This he said, "purging all meats," and gave

man his religious freedom from mere ceremonial laws which set at naught the law of love. So saying, Christ gave freedom to Paul and all other missionaries to the heathen who might thus sit at meat where the food had first been offered to idols before it had been exposed for sale in the market. The guest violated no law of God in seeking, while a guest, the highest well-being of his host, even though the distinctions of clean and unclean food did not conform to what he had been accustomed to. "What God hath cleansed call not thou common or unclean." It was worth our Lord's rebuke of heartless ceremonialism in the Pharisee's house to cleanse both food and speech in all lands and for all time. A quiet guest taught the caste-bound peoples human brotherhood in all lands.

Only when it is remembered how burning a question in the Orient has caste become, through hoary centuries of custom, are the example and influence of Christ best seen. Bishop Sargent, at the head of the mission of the Church Missionary Society in Tinnevelli, India, had some fifty-eight native clergymen whom he made it a rule to try to have at his table and to sup with him once every six months. On one occasion, after inau-

gurating this wise custom of bringing those of different castes together as fellow-guests, one of the native clergy, addressing the others, said: "I see in the event of the evening a most powerful argument in favor of our holy religion and of what it has done for us. Fifty years ago you might as well have expected to see fifty royal tigers sitting down in peace at the same meal as such a sight as this." But it needed the wise administration of the Lord's Supper to break up among the natives in the pew what was so largely destroyed at the Bishop's table. Men of high caste in some of the missions sat in front during the celebration of the Supper that they might be served before the cup was touched by those of the lower castes. This was prevented by serving them first with the bread but last with the cup. At Poona, in the Bombay presidency, in a native school equipped with every modern appliance from England, even to the inevitable rod, the school-inspector found the low-caste scholars on the hindmost seats, and the teacher now and then throwing clods at them lest he become defiled by beating them with the rod which he held in his hand. The Hindoo is but the Pharisee of India and of the twentieth century, blind and belated.

"An Englishman is like an oyster," said Sydney Smith; "you have to open him with knife and fork." The early missionaries reached our ancestors as our Lord reached Zaccheus—by eating with them—as they in turn reached the Netherlanders and Germans with the gospel at the table and in the home. In China to-day the way of access to the rudest is by a simple question: "Will you lend me your light?" The acknowledgment that you are at least a guest, dependent on the native's larger knowledge of the country in his ability to give information, makes usually a successful appeal to his duty to strangers, and is not infrequently followed by an offer of hospitality. Our Lord was giving lessons in missionary methods no less by his example than by his command, as when he said to the Seventy: "Into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you." "In that same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give." In as true a sense as at Emmaus our Lord is often made known in the breaking of bread. It is significant that, while Paul always looks upon the incarnation of Christ as a humiliation, John, who knew the Lord in the days of his flesh, always speaks of it as a manifestation of his

glory. "We beheld the glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Thus even discourteous hosts like Simon the Pharisee, who withheld the water from his soiled and weary feet and the anointing from his hair and the wonted kiss from the cheek of the Guest, learned of divine grace from one who claimed only one thing from men, and that was their love. He who had power on earth to forgive sins could in the same hour pardon one who loved much, even though a nameless sinner, and teach a lesson to the end of time in giving and receiving hospitality, even at the hands of a loveless host. Thus in seeking the lost he ever sought until he found that which was lost. Every man's house is his castle; and when the castle is taken, the man is won. So Christ showed us as a guest of those who invited him to their tables from less than the highest motives. He would win the man in the castle.

Thus it was, when he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on a Sabbath day to eat bread, that they were watching him. The cold dinner on the Sabbath was customary among the Jews to avoid needless labor, as was once the case among our ancestors who were

strict Sabbatarians. But how cold was the cheer as Jesus was conscious that they were watching him, if indeed they had not brought the man that had the dropsy to see whether or not Christ would heal him on the Sabbath! They had not long to wait. "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" was the beginning of that wholesome table talk. "Which of you shall have a son [as some of the ancient authorities have it] or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up on a Sabbath day?" The Lord of the Sabbath again showed that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath, and that the Father would have mercy rather than sacrifice. What opportunity now to speak of duties to one's fellows as he saw how some chose out the chief seats at the table or extended invitations only to those from whom like invitations could be expected! Would they not all listen as he told of the Great Supper which was to be given by the King as one of them, already touched by his words, said unto him, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God"? The Supper was nearer ready than they knew. Would they also make excuse? The table would be provided with guests even such as the one whom he had

just healed—the redeemed of every nation—while some of the children of Abraham should in vain say: "We did eat and drink in thy presence, and thou didst teach in our streets." Some may even claim that he was once their guest. Had they accepted his invitation in turn?

"There was no room for them in the inn," was not a solitary experience of the holy family. A disciple provided the mother of our Lord with a home, while the Son of Man was often without a place to lay his head. How grateful to his ear the patter of children's feet upon the stairs or the songs of children as they came to welcome him to those homes where he was the expected and welcome Guest! The arms of the childless man were filled with others' children as he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them. The Samaritans might refuse him food, or even a drink of water from Jacob's well; but there were homes—such as the two in Bethany, the home of Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha, and the home of Simon, once a leper, one too who had not forgotten to give the Lord thanks—such homes as these ever welcomed Christ, and there the Rose of Sharon exhaled its sweetest fragrance and disclosed its

rarest beauty. One other home there was, and that in Jerusalem itself, where "the good man of the house" only needed to know that the Master had need of the guest chamber for himself or for his disciples; and he ever bade him welcome in the name of the Lord. It was there that the frequent guest at last became host and instituted the Lord's Supper in the upper room, which was to become the refuge of his disciples during the dark weeks after his resurection, and where he twice appeared among them; and it was there that Pentecost experiences began after Christ had given them the promise from the Father, the pledge and assurance of his own entrance into the glory which he had with the Father before the world was.

How perfect the etching of that Bethany home where Martha served and Mary sat at the feet of the happy and helpful Guest! Martha lost much of the table talk of Jesus, doubtless, though sitting at meat with him; for it was her misfortune to be cumbered about much serving. Did she think more of her reputation as hostess than of the divine words of her Guest? Hers was at least a divided heart, anxious and troubled and not at peace. The good seed were trodden under

foot or eaten by hungry birds, and brought forth no fruit to perfection such as they did when they fell into the good ground of Mary's heart. What faith came by hearing as Mary chose the good part that should not be taken away from her! Even the death of Lazarus did not shake Mary's faith as it did that of Martha, who met Jesus, so late in coming, with the reproachful words: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." It was not an unusual thing for Martha's disquieted spirit to complain of others. In vain is given the assurance that in answer to prayer her brother shall rise again. She can only think of the resurrection of the last day, and she forbids the Lord to roll away the stone at the door of the tomb. It was not in answer to *her* prayer that Lazarus was raised. But Mary sat still in the house, content for Christ to have his own way, trusting him with a calm though grief-stricken heart. The Lord sends for her, that she may witness his greatest miracle save his own resurrection. She rises quickly to obey; but while her words are those of Martha—words doubtless that both had been using, but with different meanings, ever since their brother's death—they are words of trust now rather than of censure. If

the Lord's presence could have prevented death, could not the Lord's presence call back to life the dead? The Lord read her faith in those eyes —"the homes of silent prayer"—and needed not to say to her as he had done to Martha: "I am the resurrection, and the life." Nor was there any expectation of a future display of his power to raise her brother from the dead. It was enough that Christ was here, for he had life in himself. Though Martha was doubtless the older sister who had welcomed Christ to her house, Mary, the younger, had reaped the harvest of the quiet eye; and after the raising of Lazarus, she divided with Lazarus the wonder of all who came to the house. "Many therefore of the Jews who came to Mary and beheld that which he did, believed on him." Happy indeed the home at Bethany, like the one at Cana, where Christ leaves the blessing both of his presence and of the miracle that he wrought. The cup of water given in his name was not without its reward.

Was it the raising of Lazarus or the faith of Mary which had helped to win the faith of Simon, who, once healed of his leprosy, so that he could now invite guests to his home, like Levi, shows his gratitude by his generous hospitality? Mar-

tha, as usual, is content to serve, possibly with a sweeter and more subdued spirit of loving gratitude, as Lazarus sits at meat with the Lord. Mary brings the fragile and costly alabaster box, with its precious ointment, fit for a royal guest, and crushes the alabaster cruse, and pours the fragrant ointment on the head of Christ, the chief Guest and her Lord and Saviour. Doubtless she had been waiting for the opportunity to anoint him for his burial, as, in the shadow of his cross —which was only six days distant—he had told of his sacrificial death. Let others see in the act nothing but waste; Christ sees in it nothing but love—the love that shall be told throughout the whole world wherever the gospel of divine love itself is told. The words of the grateful Guest have sweetened all human life wherever they have been told. Again the table, no less than the mountain and the cross, became the pulpit of the Son of God, the Guest of the race, especially of all who believe.

V

OUR LORD AS HOST

Thou camest, O Lord, with the living word,
That should set thy people free;
But with mocking scorn, and with crown of thorn,
They bore thee to Calvary.
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus!
Thy cross is my only plea.

When heaven's arches ring, and her choirs shall sing
At thy coming to victory,
Let thy voice call me home, saying, "Yet there is room,
There is room at my side for thee."
And my heart shall rejoice, Lord Jesus,
When thou comest and callest for me.

—*Emily E. S. Elliott.*

We find great things are made of little things,
And little things go lessening till at last
Comes God behind them.—*Browning.*

V

OUR LORD AS HOST

THE birth hour of the Church struck in the lodgings of our Lord. Whether we reckon it from that memorable "tenth hour of the day" when Andrew and John were his guests at his invitation, or from Christ's gift of the Holy Spirit in "the guest chamber," where fifty days before he had as host, to the astonishment of his disciples, washed their feet and instituted the Last Supper, it was still where Christ dwelt that his Church was born. The Good Shepherd was the strong and mindful host preparing a table for us, even in the presence of our enemies. And it was from his table that our Lord went forth to Gethsemane and to his throne on the cross. Christ not only shared our common life; he "adorned and beautified it"—as we say in the marriage service—by his presence and first miracle that he wrought in Cana of Galilee. He who accepted our hospitality as the Guest of mankind invited all men to sup with him, and has gone to prepare a dwelling place for us in the Father's house,

that where he is we may be also. When the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, he bade men "come and see" where he dwelt; and forth from his abode Andrew goes, declaring, "We have found the Christ." While he first findeth his own brother, doubtless John, that other disciple, was not long in finding his; and so Peter and James were doubtless added in one day—happy first-fruits of the three thousand to be added in one other memorable day, as, with hearts of fire and tongues of flame, the one hundred and twenty went forth at Pentecost from Christ's guest chamber in Jerusalem.

Wherever Christ sat at meat was the head of the table. The invited Guest at Cana became the host in furnishing needed supplies, though so quietly that only the servants knew the source whence they came. The first miracle of our Lord was his answer to his first temptation in the wilderness. Ahungered as he was, he refused to turn the stones into bread, although conscious of having the power to do so. The power that he would not use for himself in his want he still uses for others in their want, and in the humiliation which must attend scant supply at a wedding feast. There was no oversupply, as of the barley

loaves after the multitude had been fed, but just as was needed the water became wine as the servants drew and bore it to the wedding guests. In Cana, both as guest and host, beginning his ministry at the household gate, he manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him. They believed on him after his miracle; but the mother of our Lord believed on him before the miracle, as, in simple faith that in his own way and time he would relieve the distress, she said to the servants: "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." Christ no more took command of Peter's boat for the miraculous draft of fishes in the hitherto empty nets to prepare his disciples, through absolute trust in him, to become fishers of men, than he took charge of the empty vessels at the wedding feast. It was not only at the base of Hermon that Peter gave him his rightful name of Christ, but on his fisher's boat when he called him "Epistata," or "Commander." "Captain, we have toiled all night and taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." It was a great day in Peter's life when Christ took command of Peter's boat. The strong man had found a stronger than he to take command of his life as well. The same sovereign word leaps to his lips

when the storm swept the lake and the boat was filling with water, as Peter awoke Christ from his sleep in the bow of the boat with: "Epistata, Epistata [Commander, Commander], carest thou not that we perish?" What manner of man indeed is this that not only the winds and the waves obey him, but loaves and fishes are multiplied at his touch, and the "conscious water saw its Lord and blushed"?

It is significant that of all our Lord's miracles but one only is narrated in all four of the Gospels; and that was when Christ became host for five thousand men, besides women and children. Mark, writing for the Romans, who had to do with the provisioning of armies, gives the longest account, although in the shortest of the Gospels. Our Lord well knew not only what he would do when he asked wherewith such a multitude could be fed, but also what effect would be produced on the people, weary and hungry after their long journey on foot to find him in the desert place, that they might hear his wonderful words. He knew that such proof of his power would place him before them as their future Breadwinner, and that they would come by force to make him king. They were to choose him not as Saviour

but as Breadwinner—as the most available leader who could best give "Bread and games," the same popular cry that was to ruin Roman manhood. He could now strike a popular chord; and multitudes, such as had followed John the Baptist, would again seek to take the kingdom of heaven by violence. But John had just been beheaded, despite his hold upon the multitude. Jesus knew the fickle crowds and their motives, and dare not commit himself unto them. But as he saw the multitudes like sheep without a shepherd, he was moved with compassion because they had nothing to eat. Such a mixed multitude had so appalled Moses with their hunger that he had cried out in despair: "Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?" The weak faith of Philip was to be strengthened, like the weak faith of Moses, by the same divine question: "Is the Lord's hand waxed short?" The common purse of the apostles had far less than the two hundred pence to buy bread to give every one a little, but it was not only they but their Lord who was to be the host.

Only a divine host could have fed such a multitude and in so orderly and divine a way. "Make

them to sit down in companies of fifty on the grass," is the quiet command of One who knew what he would do. Hungry men are apt to become as unruly as hungry beasts when they forget their common humanity in their hunger. When the coronation of the present Czar of all the Russias took place and the hungry multitudes, waiting since the early morning, broke down the barriers and trod one another to death in their madness after the loaf and cup, a weeping peasant, on hearing the appalling news, cried: "Why didn't the Little Father do as Jesus did—make them sit down in companies on the grass?" His wondering guests, disciples as well as strangers, were to witness the uplifted face as Jesus, the host, blessed and brake the barley loaves (the food of the poor) and the two small fishes taken from the sea, the great pasture land whence the poor can always gather their meat in its season. The supply was a scant one for one man's dinner, and was probably only the lunch of a healthy and provident boy, which he had brought with him. But a divine host broke the loaves, which did not diminish, and distributed them; and yet they remained until the hungry multitudes were so abundantly fed that twelve times as much remained

as the lad's basket first contained before the contents were placed in the Lord's hands. Did the Twelve remember these twelve baskets in the wilderness, when our Lord afterwards asked them, "When I sent you forth without purse and wallet and shoes, lacked ye anything? and they said, *Nothing*"? Their own food supply was sure so long as they did the Lord's will in ministering unto others in his name. What a host he had always been to them! and could they doubt his compassion for others? "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring."

Again the disciples were baffled when, probably not far from the same spot, a multitude of four thousand who had for three days been without food excited the compassion of our Lord. "Whence shall we get bread?" is the old question of dependence on mere human means, so forgetful are men of the great providences of God who do not see God in the common affairs of life as well. Now the supply is seven loaves and a few fishes, while the remaining fragments fill seven baskets; but the baskets this time are as large as the one in which Paul was let down from the wall of Damascus. A different word is used

—*spuridas* (hamper), a word denoting a much larger basket than the *kophinous* used in gathering up the fragments when our Lord spread the feast for the five thousand. So does God fulfill himself in many ways, whether he gathers from sea or land the needed food for his hungry children.

Why the miraculous draft of fishes twice, like the feeding of the multitudes twice? Perhaps "Lest we forget, lest we forget." Was it not enough that ere our Lord called the fishermen-apostles to leave their nets he had once filled them, and that after their oldest and most experienced fisherman had given up all hope for the catch, since they had toiled all night (by far the best time for fishing), and had caught nothing? No; he would renew the memory of their ever-present host, who should be with them always, even unto the end of the world. They were to be "guests of God" in all their apostolic labors, into whatever land they should go at his command. All places and all times were his who was himself homeless and with nowhere to lay his head. They should lack nothing then as they lacked nothing now, when he had led them. Because they needed him, our Lord walked in the early

morning on the shore of Gennesaret after his resurrection, and asked tenderly of his toiling and worn disciples after their night of fruitless effort: "Children, have ye aught to eat?" They answered, "Nothing," as they had done once before when he asked them if they ever lacked anything when they trusted him absolutely after they had once at his command abandoned their nets. Where their skill had failed—as they had depended wholly on themselves—he would renew at once their faith and their commission as they cast their nets anew, as he commanded, and the generous sea yielded them supplies for many days.

John alone, who told of Christ's first miracle, tells of this last, despite the fact that he could have filled the world with the books that should tell of the wonders that he did. This he told that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, they might have life in his name. John's message, as he tells of the early breakfast that our Lord had waiting for the seven that morning before they brought of the fish that they had caught, but tells that our Lord knows when our need is greatest. O widow of Zarephath, feeding at once thy child and the prophet of God with the handful of meal in the

barrel, God always hears when thou dost scrape the bottom of the barrel! For thus saith the Lord: "The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain on the earth." Was it not the same Lord who spread a table for his hungry disciples by the shores of Tiberias who interpreted the undiminishing handful of meal which a three years' famine could not exhaust? "Of a truth I say unto you, There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; and unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow." She was the last one prepared to care for God's servant, and yet in so doing her own bread was made sure. With weaker faith she would have perished shortly after the prophet came, as she was gathering the sticks to cook her last meal for herself and her child. Our Lord delights to fill the empty nets and to multiply the loaves and fishes and spread the table in the wilderness. It was our Lord who taught us to ask simply for daily bread. Our extremity is ever his opportunity.

That is what makes the prison epistles so inspiring and rich a part of the prison literature of the world. The form of the fourth dwells in the flame, whether in Babylon or Rome. What secret of the Lord was with Paul, who wrote from his prison in Rome to the Philippian Christians, who remembered the midnight song which he and Silas sang until the old prison walls shook, while the prison doors in Philippi flew open and the jailer and his entire household were converted to the faith? "I have all things, and abound, . . . and my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." So when the Emperor Valens threatened the good Bishop Basil with confiscation, banishment, and death, the heroic response was: "Nothing more? Not one of these things touches me. His property cannot be forfeited who has none; banishment I know not, for I am restricted to no place, and *am the guest of God,* to whom the whole earth belongs; for martyrdom I am unfit, but death is a benefactor to me, for it sends me more quickly to God, to whom I live and move."

Nor did our Lord permit his guests to think that his joy as host would cease with his ascension, or even with the present life of his disciples.

It was after dining in the house of one of the Pharisees that he rehearsed anew some of the lofty precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, which declared that the life is more than the food and the body than the raiment, and that God feeds the ravens that have neither store-chamber nor barn, and of how much more value are ye than the birds! He who was the Author was to be the Perfecter of their faith—a faith that should overcome the world. Already he sees his table provided with guests—the faithful ones with the wedding garments. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and shall come forth and serve them." There is nothing in heaven too good for the sons of God, whether it be white stones with the new name, or scepters or crowns or thrones, the right to eat of the tree of life, or, most sacred of all, a place at the marriage supper of the Lamb. The divine Lord himself shall serve his own. "He shall sup with me, and I with him."

Such store did our Lord set by his service of host that he would have his disciples keep alive that fact until the day of the Lord, when he should

drink the cup anew with them in his kingdom. What is the spectacle of the Last Supper but that of our Lord as host giving himself—his very body and blood—to be the very bread of life to his disciples? Never was Christ more host than in that upper room as he rehearsed all the meaning of his ministry. Again he puts in their hands the bread to be broken to hungry multitudes, but the bread is now his body. Nor is the cup wanting as he tells of pouring out his blood for the redemption and life of the world. Let them not think even of his death without recalling his life. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." He who has given us his flesh to eat now, by a very transfusion of blood, fills our depleted veins as he comes to give us life, and that more and more. How little we have asked in his name compared with what he waits to give! Ask and receive, that your joy may be full. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Thus shall we enter into the joy of the Lord, and his table be filled with guests.

VI

THE INTERRUPTED SUPPER

There is a fundamental difference between heathen and Christian morality. On the one side is the supreme authority of force; on the other, of service.—*Westcott.*

O Lord, I pray
That for this day
I may not swerve
By foot or hand
From thy command
Not to be served, but to serve.

—*Maltbie Davenport Babcock.*

VI

THE INTERRUPTED SUPPER

THE "good man of the house" had provided the guest chamber where our Lord was to eat the Passover with his disciples. It was probably the same historic upper room in the home of the parents of John Mark, the future evangelist, which was destined to be the scene of Pentecost when one hundred and twenty were gathered there with one accord, and the place of refuge for Peter when he escaped from the sword of Herod. Now Peter and John were trusted with the delicate mission of securing the paschal lamb which must be slain in the temple and its blood sprinkle the very altar. With every movement watched, it was doubtless in the gathering twilight that Jesus himself came over from his quiet home in Bethany, whose hospitality he had shared now for the last time, and joined his disciples in the prepared guest chamber. Although soon to be put to the most horrible of deaths, Christ was henceforth to be commemorated not by a fast but by a feast. It was even to be known as a feast

of joy, a very Eucharist, to be celebrated in grateful songs. Not with bitter herbs was this new feast to be eaten after Christ was seen to be the true paschal Lamb. Henceforth it was enough to know that his broken body and his shed blood were that which was given for the life of the world. Thus were men to be strengthened with might in the inner man as the sluggish current of our blood knew the transfusion of his blood.

"When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." Never had he more occasion to love them than this night, because they needed him so. It required all the forbearance and patience and strength of mother-love to help the twelve apostles in that upper room. Satan had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him. The ranks were already breaking. Could the rest be kept faithful when that very night he knew that they all would forsake him and flee? He was to bare his breast alone to the mob who came out to arrest him, saying, "I am he whom ye seek," and to say of his disciples, "Then let these men go." What

would have happened had they all been arrested? Peter might have had company in his denial that he ever knew Jesus. Our Lord's only weapon was love. Must he dare invoke or use any other now? No; love would save even Judas, if possible, as love shelters the remaining eleven.

"And supper being *served*," as the language is properly rendered, now takes place an event of such significance that John records it when he does not make mention of the establishment of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It was enough that the other evangelists had done that. John must give what they omit, because he had doubtless dwelt so often on its meaning that he knew better its deep significance. As the supper was "served" (as we, too, would say), the guests took their places, with John on one side of Jesus, so that he reclined on his bosom, as usual, and Judas Iscariot probably on the other side, so that Jesus could readily reach him, as he did, with the sop from the dish. Possibly this was the usual place of Judas when Jesus reclined at meat. While there was strife among them even now as to who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven and how they should be seated, there is no proof of any struggle for places at this supper, or any

charge that Judas had usurped any one else's place. Possibly by keeping Judas near his own person our Lord would seek to give him that strength which Judas consciously needed and even hoped to get by association with Christ, but which his covetousness prevented.

With the full Messianic consciousness, "knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, Jesus riseth from supper, and laid aside his garment, and took a towel, and girded himself." Here was another *kenosis,* another emptying of self, as the Son of God again makes himself of no reputation and takes upon himself the form of a servant. The whole atmosphere of that upper room is now changed. The strife of tongues must cease before the Lord's Supper can be instituted. Men must be still if they would hear the voice of God. In their eager questioning as to who should have the chief places in the kingdom of heaven, they had forgotten their duty to one another on earth. A selfish and worldly spirit must be driven out. In honor they must learn to prefer one another, and each to look not on his own but on the things of others. Possibly they had already gone through the customary

form of ablution when they removed their sandals preparatory to the Supper. But their hearts were not right toward each other or their Lord. John, who alone records that wonderful table talk of Jesus after the Supper, tells of an equally wonderful one before the Supper. In fact, the Supper itself must be interrupted until they hear it. There was a solemn hush before as well as after the Supper. God was in the still small voice, as he always is. Could Paul have had this new *kenosis* in mind and the scenes of the upper room, when he wrote to the Philippians, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves"? It would seem so, for he at once adds, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," and tells the story, ever wonderful, of his not counting it something to be held on to as a robber would hold on to his booty, "to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." This was our Lord's way, who ever girded himself with a towel rather than a sword.

"Be *girded* with humility," wrote Peter years after this scene, which must have left its impress upon him forever. It would have been well had

all who claimed to sit in Peter's chair have learned the same sweet lesson. Our duty to our equals is harder to perform than toward our inferiors. Popes have indeed washed the feet of the poor, but what pope has ever washed the feet of a king? Girded with a towel, after that he had poured water in a basin, Jesus began to wash his disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. What thoughts must have been awakened by such humility! and what humiliation, too, that Christ should be performing this menial office for his apostles! Probably Peter was reached last of all; and he, with his now loosened tongue (for the rest had been speechless through wonder), asks: "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" It was the same sense of unworthiness which once before had cried: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" It had been better if he had said nothing after that our Lord replied: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter." But humility can become pride and lose its true savor in arrogant self-assertion. "Thou shalt never wash *my feet.*" The emphasis is doubtless on the personal pronouns "thou" and "my." It seemed for the moment impossible as well as in-

conceivable. The quiet voice of Jesus answers: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Then Peter's true devotion asserts itself at the thought of separation from his Lord, and with a genuine humility returned (not a humility proud of itself) he begs: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." But why seek more than was given to the others? Was our Lord's act incomplete as well as inexplicable? Jesus himself makes answer: "He that is bathed [hath completed his ablutions, save the washing of his feet, just before the meal] needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew him that should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean."

The interrupted Supper now began to be served, and the first table talk of all spoken in the upper room was heard. It was an acted parable that they had witnessed—one which Jesus had promised to explain. Resuming his garments which he laid aside (for during the feet-washing it was more than an outer garment, such as his seamless robe, which he had taken off when he took upon himself the work of a servant), he takes his place as before, between John and Judas,

and presently asks: "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you." Was this, then, the meaning of it all, so that even the Supper itself should ever remind them of the acted parable? How much easier it is, we think, to love the Lord than to love our fellow-men, to sacrifice for him than for them! But are we quite sure, after all, that we love him when we find it so hard to help others? Art thou truly ready to sit down at the table of our Lord so long as "thou rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee"? "Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." No gift is safer or more sacred in God's sight than the one that awaits the return of the giver after such a mission as that. The feet-washing may well come before the Supper. It was doubtless never intended as an ordinance to become a permanent part of public worship, as many good people, like the Moravians and Dunkards, have made it. But the spirit of the feet-

washing scene must never be wanting in the Church of God. "For I have given you an example that ye also should do as I have done to you."

If the mind that was in Christ Jesus be in us also, it cannot ignore this example. Slavish imitation of it, as when the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem lays aside his heavy brocaded robe of office and ostentatiously washes out of a golden basin the feet of twelve richly robed bishops in front of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, is a mere idle form, awakening and satisfying curiosity but never arousing humility. To consent to be called "servant of the servants of God" would be possible to the proudest heart if called pope also. In striving after the letter, men have readily forgotten the spirit. The early Church never deemed that Christ had given a new command, but that he had taught a new spirit when he bade men wash one another's feet. The command is local where the spirit may be universal. An impossible command with our modes of dress, its spirit is met if we translate it, "Black ye one another's shoes." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." It was the law of his practice as well as of his teaching. When

that spirit of helpfulness occurs, it shows the mind that was in Christ Jesus and repeats his blessed example.

"If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them." Blessed is any man who conquers his own spirit of selfishness. His joy is multiplied manifold who seeks to make others happy. His own burden is lightened when trying to bear another's. Nothing is more imperious and exacting than selfishness. Pride makes one's own grief a greater one than any one else ever bore. Bereavement seems tenfold heavier to the selfish heart that cannot imagine another's loss comparable to the one now suffered. So one's own financial reverses or crop failures are far greater when every one looks on his own things and not on the things of others. This is God's curse upon the selfish. Life is ours and death is ours when Christ is ours—all to serve us, not to destroy us. It is the meek who inherit the earth. The whole earth is his who is large enough to enjoy it, and whose broad heart beats against every other man's heart as he rejoices with them who rejoice and weeps with them that weep. Blessed is that man whose knowledge is followed by practice, to whom the example and teaching of Christ become his

life. "Its greater capacity for sympathy is the glory of the nineteenth century." It is the proof of a riper humanity, more mellow and fragrant. This is the fruit of the centuries since Jesus pronounced his last beatitude before he suffered: "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them." One other beatitude only was ever spoken by him, and that the one to Thomas in the same upper room.

VII

THE TRAITOR AT THE TABLE

Let thy chief terror be of thine own soul:
There, 'mid the throng of hurrying desires
That trample on the dead to seize their spoil,
Lurks vengeance, footless, irresistible
As exhalations laden with slow death,
And o'er the fairest troop of captured joys
Breathes pallid pestilence. —*George Eliot.*

For, ever on thy burdened heart
A weight of sorrow hung;
Yet no ungentle, murmuring word
Escaped thy silent tongue.

Thy foes might hate, despise, revile,
Thy friends unfaithful prove;
Unwearied in forgiveness still,
Thy heart could only love.

—*Edward Denny.*

VII

THE TRAITOR AT THE TABLE

"He that eateth my bread hath lifted up his heel against me," declared our Lord as Judas was quietly dismissed from the table just before the institution of the Lord's Supper. Our Lord did not quote the rest of that verse in the forty-first Psalm, "whom I trusted." Judas was Christ's great failure, as John was his great success, of the original Twelve. Jesus was not mistaken in his estimate of Judas, and so fell a victim to his own error in judgment. There was in Judas a possible John, as there was in John a possible Judas. It was the possibilities in Judas that led to his being chosen, and that was true of every apostle. Our Lord trusted each as he proved worthy. Hence there was an inner circle of body-guard apostles whose names always appear first in every list. The name of Judas ever appeared last; and in his immediate company were two or three others whose possibilities were never fully developed because continuing to be slaves, more or less, of their preconceived opinions of what

the Messiah would be and do along temporal lines. Lecky well says: "The first condition of all really great moral excellence is a spirit of genuine self-sacrifice and self-renunciation." Was it not this that our Lord ever taught his apostles? and could he have failed to see the lack of response on the part of Judas? John, who knew most intimately the heart of Christ, declares: "He did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men, and because he needed not that any should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man." (John ii. 24.)

Fully a year before this, Jesus had said: "Did not I choose you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John vi. 10.) John remembered it all afterwards, and put it in the record where it belonged; but not until this fateful night did even John know that it was Judas of whom Christ spake. Did our Lord see Satan striving to have Judas that he might sift him as wheat? and did he not pray for him that his faith fail not? Was not Gethsemane itself one of those places where our Lord oft resorted with his apostles for prayer? and under the shadow of one of those old olive trees, where Christ was betrayed with a kiss, had he not doubtless prayed for this man of

weakening faith? Judas was making a losing fight during the entire last year of our Lord's ministry. He had dwelt so much upon the things that were seen and temporal, that the things which were unseen and eternal had little power or attraction. How he glowed with zeal in the days of Christ's greatest popularity in Galilee, when he fed thousands until the people came by force to make him a king! Success seemed assured then, when it only needed that the Messiah declare himself. Judas's own place, too, was secure, as the carrying of the bag pointed to yet greater responsibility in the kingdom. His administrative gifts, which our Lord would both use and develop—would they not be sure of recognition in the coming kingdom? None of the apostles saw any sign of diminishing faith in Judas in those days of growing popularity. But when our Lord saw that the people were beginning to look upon him as their great Breadwinner, and declared that "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves," Judas knew that it was a spiritual and not a temporal kingdom that Christ would set up. It was *just at this point* that the devil entered into him, and with our Lord's knowledge; for our

Lord knew from the beginning who should betray him. Judas does not break with the Twelve any more than with Christ openly, for he is planning to see what he can make out of the wreck when it comes. Then follows a year of petty thieving and of base hypocrisy, now pleading for the poor, and now putting to his own use the contents of the bag. His taciturn habit conceals his alienated heart until Mary of Bethany pours out an offering worthy of a king's ransom or burial, when Judas, off guard, thinks out loud, "Why this waste?" In vain his pretended explanation that the ointment might have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor. It was not that he loved the poor; it was because he was a thief and kept the bag. *That night* he crossed the Kedron to make his bad bargain with the high priests, as he said: "How much will ye give me, and I will betray him unto you?" His secret was no longer his own. At least Jesus knew who should betray him.

Dare Judas ever reappear in the company of Christ and his trusted friends after that? Yes; he is present as our Lord washed his disciples' feet (his own among the rest), and he heard Jesus say: "Now ye are clean, but not all." Will

he not rush now from that holy presence? But our Lord mercifully keeps Judas's awful secret. Had our Lord made known to his apostles the traitor in that hour, could Judas have left that upper room alive? How many a sword hilt has been clasped as men have heard since for the first time the story of the traitor, even when they have also learned his fate! The apostles themselves needed to be prepared for the awful news as Jesus, "troubled in spirit" (for this was the bitterest experience of all—to feel a traitor's breath upon his cheek), said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." It seemed inconceivable and impossible, save that our Lord had declared it to be so with his emphatic "Verily, verily." No wonder the startled look which each apostle gave the other, and that each dared bare his bosom to Christ with, "Lord, is it I?" Will Judas's usual reticence save him from exposure? No; he, too, must put the question. But while the others said, "*Lord,* is it I?" Judas simply asks, "*Master,* is it I?" Will he not now make his confession before them all, and cast himself in penitence at the feet of the Lord? No; remorse has begun, but penitence, with its soothing tears and sobs, he never knew. John, the bosom

friend, whispers, "Who is it, Lord, that shall betray thee?" Jesus says, "It is he to whom I shall give the sop when I have dipped it," and places it in the hand of Judas. It was the choicest piece on the dish, and was usually reserved for the favorite guest, whom the host would thus honor. Christ would save Judas even at the last, if he could. But when there is no response to such pitying love in that heart made stone by selfishness and covetousness, Jesus simply said in a tone possibly heard only by few: "What thou hast fully determined to do, do quickly." And Judas went out, and it was *night*. That was a night never followed by a dawn for Judas, the man of Kerioth.

As the retreating footfalls of Judas are heard, he, too, hears the words of Jesus: "The Son of Man goeth, even as it is written of him; but woe unto that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born." Even now the apostles know not but what Judas had simply gone on some errand for the Master. Was ever such considerateness shown for a hardened sinner—one lost to all self-respect and shame? But it was not exposure that Judas need to fear now. "Be sure your sin will

find *you* out." It was the self-exposure that he needed to fear—the revealing of himself to himself, as sin, like a mordant, eats into the very quick, destroying all delight in life until the man becomes despised in his own eyes and seeks relief in suicide.

In Leonardo's marvelous picture of the Last Supper—possibly the greatest product of the painter's genius—the moment is chosen when our Lord says, "One of you shall betray me." Deepest agitation, and even consternation, appears in every countenance but one. Judas's face wears its accustomed mask, but his startled *hand* betrays him. Judas has *upset the salt!* To have eaten another's salt, to have given thus pledges of eternal friendship and loyalty, and to violate those sacred pledges, meant death. The traitor was seen at his worst among Orientals when he upset the salt of his host, declaring that he would be no longer bound by the sworn vows of friendship. Whose salt, then, would he eat? That of the worst enemy of his host, and so form an alliance with a bitter foe? Such a traitor would barely escape with his life from the table where he dared declare his hostility. That was what our Lord meant in one of his great dinner parables, where,

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after the guests had already accepted the invitation and yet, when notified that the dinner was now ready, all with one consent began to make excuse. It could mean but one thing, and that was that a conspiracy had been formed to reject the accepted hospitality of one man that they might now accept the hospitality of another. It meant the violation of the most sacred rites of hospitality and the forming of an alliance with the enemy of the man whom they had thus betrayed. Violent and lifelong and even hereditary feuds came from such treachery. It was the utter rejection of a man whose hospitality was treated with such indignity and scorn, and that, too, after having once accepted the invitation now lightly rejected. Judas could not have been more fully exposed than when, in answer to John's whisper, Jesus said: *"He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me!"*

Judas "went to his own place." He preferred another table to the Lord's table, and he had no more part in it. From that time forth he became bold and outbreaking in his disloyalty to Christ. His love is turned to hate, and he allows himself, in his chaffering with the high priests, to be beaten down (*Jewed,* we would call it) until he

is content to receive into his cold hands the paltry fifteen dollars, the lowest price ever put upon a human life. It was the price of a slave who had been gored by an ox. "Bad bargain," say you. No, he got something besides; he got his wages; and "the wages of sin is death." Judas sold himself with Jesus!

What was there left for Judas after he had thus sold himself? As the man diminished, the devil grew in him. All that once appealed to our Lord as the making of a possible John had given place to the devil who was crowding out every trait that might appeal even to pity. One man was henceforth to be unloved of woman; and no prattling babe should ever bear the traitor's name, although the names of the Eleven are perpetuated in every land where women have learned to love the faithful of the Lord. He who had so often reclined at meat with Jesus, and had even been treated as a favored guest, now uses his knowledge of our Lord's very place of prayer ("where he oft resorted thither with his disciples") to betray him. How brazen that face, as if nothing had happened, which is turned to kiss Jesus! Luke gives us the last rebuke of Jesus as he asks, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man

with a kiss?"—as if that *act* of hypocrisy were left unfinished. Matthew tells how that Jesus would be no party to such pretended friendship, but would send into Judas's heart one last word, as if to save him as he said, "Friend, do that for which thou art come." There was nothing but ashes in the heart of Judas. His love had long since died. But our Lord, having loved his own, loved them unto the end. Judas, weakest of all and most needing the Lord's love, was loved unto the end. The memory of that love made him cry out in remorse as he flung upon the temple pavement the thirty silver half shekels used only in the temple service: "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood!" Were it *penitence,* it would have driven Judas to the cross, there to confess his sin and receive such pardon as the dying malefactor had that day. But it was *remorse,* that drives only to the place prepared (not for man, but) for the devil and his angels. No tears are shed over the sad fate of Judas any more than over the fate of Satan and his angels. Like them, he sinned the eternal sin because it was against eternal light. There remaineth no more sacrifice for such sin. The traitorous guest was dismissed from the company of the faithful

and the good. That was our Lord's act who guards the pure against the invading presence of the impure. Judas did the rest. "He went unto his own place," and he went from the very side of the Saviour of the world. After eating his bread, he lifted up his heel against the loving Lord. Verily, "after the sop, Satan entered into him." It was a complete and final surrender. Could he ever eat again? Surely never at the table of his Lord.

VIII

THE MEMORIAL SUPPER

His body, broken in our stead,
Is here in this memorial bread;
And so our feeble love is fed
Until he come.

His fearful drops of agony,
His lifeblood shed for us we see;
The wine shall tell the mystery
Until he come.

—*George Rawson.*

VIII

THE MEMORIAL SUPPER

CHRIST'S monument is a Supper! It is not, like most monuments, to celebrate his birth, but to commemorate his death. How evanescent *such* a memorial! What assurance of its being maintained? Being a reminder of the night when he was betrayed, recalling the period of Christ's deepest humiliation, when the Son of Man, the crown and glory of the race, was rejected by the rulers and religious leaders of the people among whom he had spent the days of his flesh—was it such a memorial as his disciples would long incline to maintain? As a monument proper it would, with its inscription, point back to the great historic events of his life, and so take its place amid the world's greatest monuments, which are at the same time the best historical evidences. These are evidences cut in stone which the tooth of time does not destroy. But our Lord left no such memorial, even of his birth, although it was to change the calendar of the world. His death presupposed his birth, and it was his death that he

wished commemorated, and that only by a Supper! "Do *this* in remembrance of me." This will be enough. It is not to be done on anniversary occasions, as men commemorate birthdays; but weekly or daily, if desired, or, like the early Church, whenever the disciples were gathered together, as an inseparable part of worship. You may forget my life if you will only "show forth my death."

The Good Shepherd layeth down his life for his sheep. Other sheep I have which are not of this flock; let them also know it, and observe this memorial, that there may be one fold and one Shepherd. And so it has come to pass that there was never such a monument or such a memorial since the world began. It is not placed on some lofty mountain, where the sailor can see it afar, nor in the crowded metropolis or capital of the nation, to be seen at long intervals. It is a monument erected in every village. It is set up by the bedside of the sick and dying, or maintained in the caves and catacombs where God's saints take refuge and await a martyr's death. It is established in the isles of the sea, and wherever, in pagan or Mohammedan lands, two or three are gathered together in his name. It will continue

until Christ come again. No memorial is so universal; no monument is so permanent. It is the *In Memoriam* of the dead Christ maintained in all lands by all who worship the living Christ. It looks backward and forward.

In the hour of his seeming defeat our Lord quietly establishes the memorial of his final triumph. The Lord's Supper was to be more than a memory feast; it was to be a feast of hope. How pathetic our Lord's one request, "Do not forget me!" Then spake his perfect human heart. Then spake, too, the heart of God. How often had Christ sat at meat with them! Would they not remember him now every time that they sat at meat? How often had he shown forth his glory at some wedding feast, as in Cana, or at some table, as in the home of Matthew or Zaccheus, where the kingdom of heaven was brought near! This memorial supper will keep alive the glory of his presence at every table where he is made known in the breaking of bread. It was impossible to establish such a memorial supper so long as Judas was present. Our Lord was discomposed by his presence after he had given him the sop and Satan had entered into him. The sacredness of hospitality was being violated every mo-

ment that he lingered. Christ spoke as if with a shudder when he said: "The hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table." Our Lord's utterances seemed broken and almost disconnected at the last until Judas's retreating footfalls are heard. "Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." Our Lord was once more to show forth his glory at the table in establishing that memorial that was to show forth his glory in all the coming centuries. Christ is to show men the Father from this hour as *speaking like a Father.* He says for the first time, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you." The voice of the Father had been heard before, as when Jesus said to the sick of the palsy, "Child, thy sins are forgiven thee." Then, too, in addressing his apostles—few if any of whom were younger than Jesus—he tenderly says: "Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" (Mark x. 24.) Now, as the father-heart beats stronger than ever, as the memorial supper is about to be instituted, our Lord calls his apostles "little children."

Henceforth they will remember what our Lord had long since said: "I and my Father are one." We know God as Father because he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faith in God which is not faith in Christ is not faith in the Father, and is imperfect, incomplete, and will not last.

It seemed necessary for Judas to depart before our Lord could institute the memorial supper. Only they could be depended upon to maintain it who were wholly the Lord's. If Jesus was to enter henceforth and forever into our common life, it was to lift it to the level of his cross of sacrifice. Religious festivals and feasts are common to all religions, but none had the sacredness of this one now to be instituted. None could even partake of any other and become a partaker of this one. Paul had to write to the Corinthians: "Ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils." (1 Corinthians x. 21.) The heathen festival or feast was an orgy marked by wild and dissolute revelry. It was a time for the gratification of appetite and the basest passions. It is true the gods were invited to be present, because it was deemed that they, too, would enjoy such sensual orgies. Not only were Christians forbidden to take part in

them, but they were taught that they had nothing whatever in common with the Supper of our Lord. So vile were the practices which marked these pagan festivals from the earliest time, that even the children of Israel were forbidden to inquire how the heathen worshiped their gods, or even to mention their names. In the hush of the upper room, with the shadow of the cross now visible to all as it fell across our Lord, he established the sacred feast with his body as the bread and his blood as the drink—all given for the life of the world. Henceforth they were to know what Jesus meant when he said, "I am the Bread of Life." It were easy with the multiplied loaves to feed multitudes who sought him again simply to be fed, as they thought the Messiah would bring again the days of manna from heaven. Jesus dared not trust himself to such followers. But now, to the winnowed few out of the multiplied thousands who had eaten, as it were, from his hand, Jesus shows anew that "except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood ye have not eternal life in yourselves. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him."

Our Lord made the memorial supper a joyous

occasion because the door of that upper chamber opened into the heavenly places. It was the door of hope for all to whom Christ was the Door. It opened into the Father's house and gave glimpses of its many mansions. It showed a returning Saviour coming to claim his own, that they might be with him forever to behold the glory which he had with the Father before the foundation of the world. It showed a triumphant Church still observing this joyous festival until he come. It showed a new covenant with men made in the blood of the Redeemer, and a righteous God faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It was not the testament of a dead man that was celebrated, but the covenant of a living Lord, whom the grave could not hold. It was the promise of that day when we should sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb, when all the redeemed should be prepared as a bride for her husband. It was to help and purify, as well as to save and strengthen, all humanity. Blessed sacrament that has helped men to live and to die for these nineteen centuries of grace! It is the imperishable memorial! Lofty monuments shall yet crumble as the earth shall be riven by earthquakes.

The sea shall yet claim large spaces where the monuments of man now lift their tall heads. Massive statues shall disappear forever and bring down with them into oblivion the great names which they commemorate. Even mighty cities, whose navies go afar to bear their commerce and spread their fame, shall be brought to ruins, as were Tyre and Babylon and Nineveh and Carthage, until there is scarce one stone left on another. All that men have done to establish and perpetuate their memories shall surely disappear in the coming of the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, but the name of Jesus shall be kept alive in all the earth and in heaven itself at the memorial supper of the Lord. In the establishment of our holy religion, if Jesus sowed his name in our humanity by his teachings, he "plowed it in" by his passion and this memorial of his death. "This do in remembrance of me." It was our Lord's last command but one, and that one is like unto it: "Go ye and disciple all nations, teaching them to do whatsoever things I command you." The Lord's table helps to make permanent the work of the missionary on every continent and in every island of the sea.

More than all else has the memorial supper

helped to teach man reverence. It has not needed the celebration of the mass, with its tinkling bells and swinging and smoking censers, or its awful hush as priests in costly vestments perform the most sacred rites of the Greek or the Latin Church. The very human attempt to make sacred what is already sacred separates us from God rather than unites us to God. Clouds of incense were not needed when Jesus took the bread and the cup and, after he had given thanks, gave them to his disciples. What was needed then and ever since is to "discern the Lord's body," and so the efficacy of his atoning blood, and thus be able to appropriate himself as the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. Reverence is essential to true faith, and faith in turn begets greater reverence. Men in the Middle Ages would swear by "the holy mass" as the most sacred thing on earth, because to them it meant the very body and blood of Christ. European morals were changed until nameless sins were made impossible as the blessed sacrament was everywhere celebrated, with its sacred story of the Son of Man made perfect through suffering, and then freely offered for the sins of men.

John omits the account of the institution of the memorial supper, but not what gave it such deep significance as Jesus said: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." There is nothing lacking to faithful love when our Lord's love is at once the example and the measure of our own. Love was to have a new meaning from that hour, with emphasis upon its warmth and its fidelity even unto the end. "As I have loved you," despite your weakness and blunderings, "love one another." Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end. The bitterest hour of Peter's life will come to-night. Do not cast him off if he falters; and Peter, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. The Lord's table is the place for forbearance and sympathy and mutual help in prayer. Thus will be made his *kingdom,* for it is not the place for the individual alone. "But ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." The Lord's table is an *extension* table, good for both worlds and all saints.

IX

THE GREAT TABLE TALK—FAITH THE CURE OF TROUBLE

Men think that they believe in Christ because they believe in the Bible; they really believe in the Bible because they believe in Christ.—*R. W. Dale.*

If Christ is the eternal Son of God, God is indeed and in essence a Father; the social nature, the spring of love, is of the very essence of the Eternal Being; the communication of his life, the reciprocation of his affection, dates from beyond time—belongs, in other words, to the very being of God.—*R. H. Hutton.*

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
  Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
  By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
  Thou madest man, he knows not why,
  He thinks he was not made to die:
And thou hast made him; thou art just.

—*Tennyson.*

IX

THE GREAT TABLE TALK—FAITH THE CURE OF TROUBLE

MEN make much of the Sermon on the Mount, as if it were Christ's one great deliverance. Doubtless his discourse in the upper room was at once more continuous and a much fuller expression of the things of God. The one had to do with the law of God; the other, with the Person of God. In the one, we find much that was believed by them of olden time set in a clearer light; in the other, we are face to face with God himself. In one, Christ appears as the great ethical teacher; in the other, as the greatest of theologians. Christ is the world's foremost teacher of theology, and his theology is found in these four chapters of John rather than in the three chapters of Matthew. Doubtless the world needed both these wonderful deliverances; but unless John had given us his Gospel and this great table talk, we could never have known the mind and heart of the Father. As a teacher of ethics on the mountain side, Jesus was heard by many besides his

disciples; as a theologian, he spoke only to those who were prepared to hear him. Thomas and Judas (not Iscariot) are our representatives as they ask their eager questions. We, too, beg with Philip: "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." A more formal and public discourse may suffice as we are taught morals, but our souls crave to ask questions when we would know more about God.

Thus in this upper room and at the table our Lord answers the questioning hearts of his apostles and shows us the Father. Better far lose every other word that Christ ever spoke than these words about God. Because the Son had dwelt in the bosom of the Father from all eternity and came out from God and went to God, he becomes the "time exposure" of God. He that hath seen him hath seen the Father also. How easy the transition, after our Lord had talked so much *about* the Father, for him to be heard talking *with* the Father in that greatest of prayers—great in its simplicity and in its directness of communion, aside from the wonderful reach of its petitions that take in both worlds! So easy is the transition that we scarce know when Christ has ceased to talk with men and begun to talk

with God. Was there ever another table scene like that, save one, when men "beheld God, and did eat and drink" (Exodus xxiv. 11)?

The gates of the future stood ajar that night as Peter asked, "Lord, whither goest thou?" There were more than *three* crosses on that road that Jesus was about to take. Did Peter realize that his own cross was along that way as Jesus answered, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards"? A prospective martyr once thrust his hand into the flame and drew it back in agony. He dreaded the morrow lest, if he could not endure that his hand be slightly burned, he could much less endure the burning of his entire body. The morrow found him calm and indifferent to pain; for he was not facing suffering in his own strength, but in the Lord's own way. Peter's time had not come, despite his urgent plea: "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thee." Must the answer indeed be given? "Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Before the early morning thou shalt deny me thrice." If it be so with Peter, the recognized leader and ready spokesman, what of the rest of the apostles? What can save them?

Troubled they might well be. Their Master was to be betrayed that night into the hands of wicked men, and to be given a mock trial—a very travesty of justice—and, after the greatest personal indignities, be crucified on the morrow between two malefactors. What was before them now, with the Master crucified, Judas sold to Christ's enemies, and Peter denying thrice and with an oath that he had ever known Jesus? Whom could they believe in now? Christ, who knew their heartrending anguish—the very anguish of despair—quietly answers: "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me." This is Christ's cure for trouble. "Have faith in God; that anchor holds." To be without God is ever to be without hope in this world or any other. Where was there ever made such an assertion of his divinity as when our Lord said, "Believe also in me"—whatever happens, still believe in me? This is a challenge—nay, even a command—to faith. Faith is not a mere thing of the intellect; it is a thing of the heart and of the will as well. Our Lord had answered the question, "What must we do, that we may work the works of God? This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

(John vi. 28, 29.) The supremest work any man is ever called on to do is to *believe*—to *believe whether any of the rulers do or not,* to believe regardless of who rejects. The true test of faith in a man is to trust him when others refuse their faith in him—to trust him regardless even of adverse evidence against him. When you do not know a man, you must judge his character by his deeds; but when you know his character, you can judge his deeds by his character. True faith in Christ judges everything against him by his character. Thus they were to judge his death sentence on the morrow. Even though Jesus be laid in the grave, they were to have such faith in him that they dared believe that death could not hold him whom the heavens *must* receive till the times of restitution of all things. The cross was no place for Christ, even though the death sentence were pronounced upon him. The grave was not his home, although tender and loving hands were to lay his pallid body there. Faith must assert itself against rulers of the darkness of this world, as also against principalities and powers, when it came to who Jesus *was.*

Our Lord spoke as one who expected to be believed. His Messianic consciousness was never

clearer and brighter than now, as his hour has come. For this cause, that after all his buffetings it might remain undimmed, he had come to this hour. He was to say on the morrow—yea, that very night—to his enemies in Gethsemane: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." But to his own sons in the faith in the upper room Christ simply said: "Believe, believe in God, believe also in me." *He had the right to be believed.* Had he ever misled them by a single word? Had he ever awakened any false hopes or put forth any unwarranted claims? Had not every utterance been transparent and truthful? Was not the keynote of every sentence of his three years' ministry, "If it were not so, I would have told you"? Had he not won men to belief in goodness and in truth? Did he not even claim, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice"? It was for this end that he was born, and for this cause came he into the world that he might bear witness to the truth. "Believe in me if ye believe in truth. Believe in me if ye believe in God." Nay, Christ was bidding men who still craved to see the Father to believe in the Father because they believed in the Son. "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me: or else be-

lieve me for the very works' sake." Christ's greatest credential was himself. The chief evidence of the truth of Christianity is the Son of God. It is a step downward even to believe on him for his works' sake, after having known the Son. Nicodemus believed on him for his works' sake; let his apostles believe on him for what he is in himself.

The Church of Christ accepts Christ's own ground of faith—his consciousness of what he was. He becomes the theologian of his Church through that consciousness. His knowledge of the Father is fullest, his vision of the future is clearest and completest, his judgment throne is where we all expect to stand because he is the Son of Man. "We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge," the Church of God has been *singing* these centuries, since great Ambrose of Milan sang it first. These words have not been recited simply as a creed, but *sung* as a mighty *Te Deum* by all who love his appearing. The bridal hour of the Church is when she shall see again her glorified Lord, who "shall come to be our Judge." It is not the outer life of Christ that concerns us, but his inner life. It is not his miracles but his prayers, not his teachings to men

but his talks with God, that best reveal the Son, and so the Father also. "O righteous Father, the world knew thee not, but I knew thee," is a prayer that came from but one heart since the world began. It is enough. None can ever show us the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. It was given to Matthew also to see Christ's closet door ajar and to hear him pray (Matthew xi. 27-30): "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father; and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." Now who shall share that blessed knowledge? For what purpose this indwelling fullness of the Godhead bodily? Listen as Christ completes the "pearl of his sayings," as, coming from his talk with the Father, he calls to weary and sinful men: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Easy and light they may be to our shoulders, but their weight crushed him to the ground as, in Gethsemane and on Golgotha, he

bore the yoke for us. Our troth must be pledged to him in Gethsemane; and at the cross of Calvary we must take him for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, until death do us part. "Believe also in me." The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.

But why "also in me"? Is it not enough to believe in God? No; faith in Christ is the supreme need of the soul. Our deepest belief in God is in God in Christ. Some belief in God obtains everywhere and among all tribes and nations of men. It is belief that comes from nature which reveals God's natural attributes of wisdom and power, but not his moral attributes of love and mercy and goodness. The Deist believes in God, but without a revelation. He has never seen "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ." Belief in God alone is not enough. "This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, *and* Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." To know God we must know that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." (2 Corinthians v. 19.) This is Christ's ministry of reconciliation and ours. For this cause Christ's mission in the world was justified. If men could know God

without Christ, then why should he leave the bosom of the Father? Nay; without the Son how could we know the Father, or even that God was a Father? What assurance had the wisest of the ancient philosophers, without Christ, of a single fatherly attribute in God? But when Christ comes, we know both the Son and the Father, and we can trust both the Father and the Son. Our religion alone puts the very heart of religion in an act of *trust*. We trust because ours is a God worthy of our absolute trust, as the God who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. Unless we trust the Son, how can we trust the Father that sent him? "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also." (1 John ii. 23.)

Faith in God does not long survive faith in the Son of God. Unless we see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ, we cease to see it at all. Unless God has spoken in his Son, no man has ever heard the voice divine. Take the story of the incarnate Son from our sacred books, and what is left? To believe in God we must believe in Christ. It is not two Gods that we worship, but it is "God

and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." We can worship the Father only through the Son.

> The homage that we render Thee
> Is still the Father's own:
> Nor jealous claim, nor rivalry,
> Divides the Cross and Throne.

"Believe also in me."

X

THE GREAT TABLE TALK—THE HOME-LAND

Who seeks for heaven alone to save his soul
May keep the path, but will not reach the goal;
While he who walks in love may wander far,
But God will bring him where the blessed are.

—*Henry Van Dyke.*

The Homeland! O the Homeland!
The land of souls free born!
No gloomy night is known there,
But aye the fadeless morn:
I'm sighing for that country,
My heart is aching here;
There is no pain in the Homeland
To which I'm drawing near.

—*Hugh R. Haweis.*

X

THE GREAT TABLE TALK—THE HOMELAND

THAT is a wonderful challenge to faith again when Jesus at the Last Supper comforts his disciples by the assurance of the many mansions in his Father's house. "Abodes" is the word used (something *permanent*), and used only once elsewhere. When in this same hour (John xiv. 23) Jesus answers the question, "How wilt thou manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?" he tells of the Father and the Son making their "abode" with the disciple who loves and obeys his word. The twofold assurance of the existence of these "abodes" in "my Father's house" is: "If it were not so, I would have told you," and "For I go to prepare a place for you." The Revised Version properly inserts "for" before "I go to prepare a place for you." Heaven is made real to us by the assurance of Christ's unquestioned word, and by the fact that his very absence from his disciples is in their interest, as he goes to prepare a place for them. Our Lord's mission is a twofold one from this time forward—to prepare a

place for us in the "many-mansioned house," and to prepare us for the place. His unfaltering purpose is to colonize humanity in heaven. His redeemed out of every nation and tongue must take the places of the angels who kept not their first estate. Christ's word and work are our guarantee of the home beyond. His promises are our "title deeds." He himself is the Way there. That city of God has need of neither the sun nor the moon to shine upon it, for the Lamb is the light thereof. He is our Light there no less than here; for he is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. He who thus commands us to believe on him "also," gives the ample reason for our faith. He is no more the ladder let down from heaven, with the angels of God ascending and descending upon it, than his promises, as a mighty bridge, span the great gulf for men to pass over with songs of rejoicing on their lips.

With his deep spiritual insight, George Matheson, in his "Studies of the Portrait of Christ," well says: "On its human side the religion of Jesus is the effort to construct a cosmopolitan *home;* on its divine side it is the effort to glorify a universal Father. On both sides it is essentially the religion of the *family.* I have heard it said

that Christianity was narrow at the beginning because it exhorted only to 'love *the brethren.*' But I say that this exhortation expresses not the beginning but the final goal of Christianity. What the religion of Jesus contemplates is a brotherhood of man. What Jesus seeks from beginning to end is an extension of the family relation from sphere to sphere until it shall finally include the united world. His first recorded utterance is, 'Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?'; and one of his latest is, 'In my Father's house are many mansions.' The world to him is ideally a colossal *home*—the potential scene of a united family group, whose union is not the least complete because it exists along with individual varieties. The house has many mansions; but in spite of that, its brotherhood is unbroken, for all its inmates are the children of one Father."

In an especial sense the eleven apostles in the upper room, taking their last meal together, composed the *family* of Christ. His departure filled them with dismay. Would their family life be now broken? Would the departure of their Lord sever all ties that bound them to each other as well as to him, and must they now be scattered, never to sit at the same table again? Did not our

Lord divine their thoughts as he told them of a permanent abode in their Father's house—a place ample for them all? It requires either a great affection or a great sorrow to humanize us enough to mingle our joys or our tears. Hope watches beside the sealed sepulcher to hear His voice who says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Never does heaven seem so real to us as when we think of it as the homeland. It is the place for reunions, of restored family groups—"no wanderer lost, a family entire in heaven." So sang "the Prodigal Son of the Scottish Church," doubtless with memories of many "a cotter's Saturday night" in his own pleasant home. The forgotten teachings of childhood assert themselves as the vacant chair at the table tells of a new grave in the churchyard and the desolate ones talk of the reunion in the Father's house. So turned the thoughts of Christ's family to their next meeting place as our Lord assures them that he will not only go and prepare a place for them, but will come again to receive them unto himself, that where he is there they may be also. The family tie among them shall never be broken. Heaven itself would not be complete without them. The incarnation of our Lord was

to be a permanent one. Humanity was not only to have a permanent representative in heaven—Christ "our forerunner," who has entered within the veil—but his mission is to bring many sons unto glory. His very glorified form is the model of our own when we come home, "the bodies of our humiliation being changed and made like unto his glorious body according to the mighty power whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." Whatever else the homeland is, it is large enough for all; it is more real because more abiding than earth; it is where Christ is, and where we shall be made like him. That is our preparation for the place which he has gone to prepare that we may know him in the power of his resurrection, when he shall make all things new. Heaven is surer and more real than earth. Its relations remain more unbroken. No contingencies disturb that life as they do our life here, for there is no sin or death there. With Christ's word for it, we know more about heaven than we do about earth. Who knows what his to-morrow may be on earth? What crowns may be thrown into the gutter before morning! The explosion of a single bomb might change the history of the planet. One mighty tidal wave might make all

humanity weep. But there God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and "there shall be no more sea." What resources has divine love for sheltering the family of God in the homeland! Christ has brought this immortality to light by his gospel. We needed his *authoritative* words, "Believe also in me."

"I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." *The whole question of our religion depends on where Christ is.* Whither did he go? Which way was his face set? Is there but one place in all the universe where he could have gone? "The heaven *must* receive him until the times of restitution of all things," is the deep, instinctive conviction of the believer. If there be a heaven, Christ is there; for there is no other possible place for him. Heaven must exist for him, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. We *know* whither he has gone. But how about the way? Can we follow him? "The way ye know." Has all Christ's teaching been forgotten? He who is the Door is the Way. He who is the Light is the Way. "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." Christ is all that

we need. "Without the Way there is no going; without the Truth there is no knowing; without the Life there is no living," said à Kempis. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." The Father's house is for the sons of God. But to as many as receive Christ, to them he gives power to become the sons of God. We can enter in only by the Door, but the Door is for all. The Father is everywhere the Son is, and he that seeth the Son seeth the Father also. Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Yet it is not my works that are my chief credential, but myself. "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me."

Knowing the Way, the assurance of being in it shall not be wanting. "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." Christ's greatest work was the whole revelation of the grace and truth of

God for men. What was his ministry may be ours when it pleases God to reveal his Son in us. The more we know of Christ, the more we can make him known; and in doing that, we show the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ. Christ manifests his glory in every one who receives him as he gives him power to become a son of God. His crowning credential was a passion for souls—"the poor have the gospel preached unto them." That was more than to heal lepers or to raise the dead. It is the saving of men for both worlds. "Saved to serve." There is no such power which comes into a soul as the power of an endless life. It was witnesses of the *resurrection* who were made apostles. The secret of their power was their personal knowledge of the risen Lord. This caused men to know that they had been with Jesus when they saw the mighty works which they did in the name of Jesus. This made possible Pentecost with three thousand converts in a day, and the aftermath when thousands more became obedient unto the faith and a great number of the very priests also believed. Christ's works were among the children of Israel; theirs had the Gentile world as their mighty field. Greater works

than even those which Jesus wrought were done in his name. The apostles became fruitful, and so became the *manifested* life as branches of the Vine, and glorified the Vine as fruit-bearing branches. "Because I live, ye shall live also." Each was necessary to the other. They were his body; he was their very spirit. The living body, with its tireless activities, told of the living Christ at the right hand of the Father.

Another proof of his place of power in the heavenlies, where he was gone to prepare a place for them, was their new power in prayer. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do." Every answered prayer glorifies the Father through the Son, who ever liveth to make intercession for us. It shows Jesus at the right hand of the Father, the place of influence and power. "Father, thou hearest me always." The large use of Christ's name in prayer, an unconditioned promise of blessing, is possible because our Lord had already taught his disciples the true nature of prayer. Prayer is not overcoming the divine reluctance so much as it is bringing us to the divine willingness. It is less bringing God to our

way than finding ourselves in such vital sympathy with God's will that we rejoice in his way. "Prayer for ourselves is self-surrender; prayer for others is self-sacrifice." In each instance the name of Christ written on our hearts, which gives the assurance of answered prayers, is his life within. How easy is prayer when we have the mind of Christ! What will not God do for one who shares in Christ's spirit of service, humbling one's self the better to minister to others? "The" name which is given Christ above every other name is the name which he gives to us to use in our ever-prevailing prayers. It is "the" name of Him who emptied himself, taking upon him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. Those who wear that name have nothing denied them, for they can ask for nothing that he would not ask for. The Spirit helpeth our infirmities in such prayers, and the prayer of the Great Intercessor mingles with our prayers and gives them success before the throne of grace. Our Lord is now where he can do most for us. "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

XI

THE GREAT TABLE TALK—THE VINE-BRANCHES

This is the whole of religion: to get out of self in order to get into God.—*Fénelon.*

Never further than Thy cross,
  Never higher than Thy feet;
Here earth's precious things seem dross,
  Here earth's bitter things grow sweet.

Here we learn to serve and give,
  And, rejoicing, self deny;
Here we gather love to live,
  Here we gather faith to die.

—*Elizabeth R. Charles.*

XI

THE GREAT TABLE TALK—THE VINE-BRANCHES

As our Lord at the Last Supper declared the organic unity between himself and his disciples, he literally said: "I am the Vine, and ye are the Vine-branches." It is a most interesting fact that the Greek word *klama,* used for "branch" in this wonderful table talk, is used in the New Testament to denote only the branch of a vine. It is therefore best translated "vine-branches," in distinction from the branches of a tree, for which a very different word is used. There are trees which are grown alone for fuel; and in Palestine only some of the branches are cut off, leaving the tree otherwise undisturbed to grow others in their places. But the vine-branch has a distinct function as a fruit-bearer; and unless it bear fruit it is useless, and so is cast into the fire to be gotten out of the way. The heat which it yields would not justify its being cultivated. But the vine-branch is that by which the fruit is produced, as the vine itself bears no fruit. There-

fore fruit-bearing is at once its life and its glory. This fact, too, makes it the glory of the vine. It is not only the vine-branch that is known by its fruit, but the vine is known by its fruitful vine-branches. Their interests are one and inseparable, showing a complete organic unity. I saw in Brazil a peculiar fruit tree, the *Jaboticaba,* whose delicious fruit grew on the body of the tree and on the limb rather than on the twigs. But nowhere does the vine bear fruit save by its vine-branches. The life of the vine manifests itself through the branches, and the branches have no life aside from the nourishing vine whose life-blood circulates in every part. Such was the relation which Christ declared to exist between himself, "the true Vine," and his disciples, "the vine-branches."

Christ is more than the Door to the sheepfold. He is even more than the Good Shepherd seeking until he find and even laying down his life for the sheep. He is their life, protecting, guiding, feeding, so that they want no good thing. But more than all, he restores their souls by dwelling in them, not only giving them his life in a single act, but his disciples are so united to him that the very life which they live they live by faith on the Son

of God, who loved them and gave himself for them. Christ needs to change the figure to show the sacred intimacy and union between himself and his disciples. The life of the Vine is constantly given to the vine-branches, while the vine-branches in their organic growth and fruitfulness glorify the Vine. So the Church is the body of Christ, the fullness of him who filleth all. So close is this relation, that Paul uses the name Christ when we expect him to use the word "Church." Thus, in writing to the Corinthians concerning the diversity of gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians xii. 12), he says: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is *Christ.*" Christ *is* the Church—himself the Vine and his disciples the vine-branches, but making together an organic whole. We cannot conceive of the Church existing aside from him, and even his present life is made manifest by the life and fruitfulness of his disciples. He and they constitute the Church. Each manifests the life of the other. Was ever there such *oneness* of life? "Because I live, ye shall live also." Our Lord might have added: "Because ye live, I shall live also. Ye are my witnesses that the world

may know that the Father hath sent me. As the Father hath loved me, even so have I loved you. Continue ye in my love." Christ can no more abandon his own Church and cease to love it than the Father can cease to love his Son. Only the fruitless vine-branch can ever be separated from the living Vine. "The highest point in the evolution of man is fellowship with God." It is only the surrendered life that is for God's complete use. God will use all that we give him.

Now, as the end of the vine-branch is fruitfulness, one of two things must take place: the Father, who is the husbandman, separates the dead and fruitless branch, or, where any branch is doing less than its best, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit. The viniculturist tells us that fruit is an arrested branch. If the branch were left to itself, it would run mostly to wood and tendrils and leaves. To arrest this tendency, the husbandman knows just where to use the pruning knife. At that point fruit appears in place of "nothing but leaves." The abundant life within now shows itself in rich clusters of ripened fruit in place of mere woody growth of whatever sort. But the branch must be cleansed by the pruning knife to realize its highest life as a

branch. The pruning process is a cleansing process, even though the leaves be glossy and the tendrils beautiful. "Now ye are clean through the work which I have spoken unto you." How many a selfish ambition and petition had Christ rebuked and pruned!

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: yet afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." The greatest possible waste is a *wasted sorrow,* pruning without fruit—the surgeon's knife, but no return of health. Never was the pruning knife more used by our Lord than to cleanse Peter's impulsive spirit. There could have been no Pentecost without that same sharp sword of the Spirit which Peter himself had felt and now used. Paul in time learned to know that every stoning and every imprisonment meant a better fruit year. Listen as he tells the secret of his fruitfulness: "In labors more abundantly, in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. . . . If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities." When we think the knife has surely cut too deep this time, as they gather about Paul's unconscious

form after he is stoned at Lystra, he has no sooner recovered consciousness than he begins to rejoice that he has been counted worthy to suffer for the Lord Jesus. It was the suffering servant of God who saw of the travail of his soul and was satisfied. It was the marks of the Lord Jesus that Paul bore on his body. "Henceforth let no man trouble me," either by thoughtless criticism of my suffering or unwise interference with God's way. Did God not also show his way unto Moses, whose conquest of himself and of his nation was through the bread of tears? "Without shedding of blood there is"—*nothing*. The very dust of which a great man is made is moistened with tears. *Jesus wept.* "Even though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered." The Vine bleeds with the vine-branch! I am the *Christ,* ye are the *Christians;* and our life is one and inseparable. The head not only suffers for but *with* the members, and suffers first and most.

No greater calamity can come upon a vine-branch than to yield to the solicitation to fruitlessness. To be content to live for one's self is the cessation of Christian growth and fruitfulness. There is no life without growth. Unfruit-

fulness tells of decaying power and vitality. The palm tree bears its best fruit in old age; therefore "the righteous shall flourish like a palm tree." It is one of the remarkable signs of the genuineness of the religious life of the Korean Christians that they insist in all the churches that no candidate for church membership be received until he first brings another soul to Christ. "By their fruits ye shall know them." "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples." How speedily the soul may become sere and shriveled that ceases to know the joy of the Lord in constant fruitfulness! Sweeter than honey in the honeycomb are the words of God to a soul who is ever telling them to another. The very best life of the rosebush is promoted by plucking the blooming flowers to make way for others. The wise florist never lets them die on the bush. No rose tree is glorified by withered and dead blossoms. Our Lord had some keep silence after he had healed them, that they might the better consider the reach of his power; but when that power was so grasped that experience could make it vital in others, Jesus would make an evangelist and missionary of a healed demoniac. Out of Mary Magdalene Christ

had cast seven devils, and she became "an apostle to the apostles" on the morning of the first Easter.

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you." It is *then* as if Christ himself did the asking when his words *abide* in us. We ask then as the sons of God through him who hath given us power to become the sons of God by believing on him. The words of Christ constantly abiding in us are the assurance of his presence. "It is not seeing our friends that makes them ours; it is believing in them." They are ever near us whom we absolutely trust. Our own acts are performed as in their immediate sight. We scorn to do anything in their absence that we would refrain from doing when they are present. The word to us is *substance.* It is reality itself. Their promises are "title deeds." So do the vine-branches take in the life of the Vine. For Christ's words to *abide* in us is for his words to become principles of life and motives of action, as we share his very loves and delight that his life purposes are ours also. "For me to live is Christ." We no longer live but Christ lives in us when we have a passion for making him known in the conversion of

sinners and the edifying of believers. The Holy Spirit which we have is the same that was given without measure unto him. He shows himself in a passion for revealing Christ, taking ever of the things of Christ and showing them unto us. Christ's theme was no more the Father than the Spirit's theme is the only begotten Son, in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Our speech betrayeth us.

Would ye know how to abide in Christ? Then abide in his words. Perhaps our Lord's most far-reaching words were when he said: "If ye *abide* in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John viii. 31, 32.) To abide in his words is to live in them.

I know no life divided,
O Lord of life, from thee;
I know no death, O Jesus,
Because I live in thee.

The Son abideth forever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free forever. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's command-

ments, and abide in his love." It was because "for the joy that was set before him" that Jesus was overflowing with joy, even in this hour, and shared it with his disciples, as he says: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

Many have wondered what suggested this rich parable of the Vine in this hour. It is not far to seek the answer as we see the wine before him and how he said: "This cup is the new covenant in my name. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his *friends.* Ye are my *friends,* if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants but *friends;* for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you *friends;* for all things I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth *fruit,* and that your *fruit* should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye may love one another." Through Christ alone did they get their standing as sons. Accepted through him, forgiven through him, they must reign through

him both now and ever. Their joy was to be *harvest* joy; for they should not only bring forth fruit, but their fruit should remain. Only once before had he called them friends, and that in a time of threatened peril. (Luke xii. 4.) How tender those words seemed now as they thought of them—"And I say unto you *my friends,* Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do."

"There is nothing of evil in life for him who rightly comprehends that death is no evil." *Abide* in me as the vine-branches *abide* in the vine. "Because I live, ye shall live also."

XII

THE GREAT TABLE TALK—THE OTHER COMFORTER

II

No distant Lord have I,
  Loving afar to be;
Made flesh for me, he cannot rest,
  Until he rests in me.

Brother in joy and pain,
  Bone of my bone was he,
Now,—intimacy closer still,—
  He dwells himself in me.

I need not journey far
  This dearest Friend to see,
Companionship is always mine,
  He makes his home with me.

I envy not the Twelve,
  Near to me is He;
The life he once lived here on earth
  He lives again in me.

Ascended now to God,
  My witness there to be,
His witness here am I, because
  His spirit dwells in me.

—*Maltbie D. Babcock.*

XII

THE GREAT TABLE TALK—THE OTHER COMFORTER

It was in the great paschal discourse of the upper room where our Lord gave the fullest and clearest teaching concerning the Holy Spirit, and thus revealed to us the third adorable Person in the Holy Trinity. The Old Testament is rich in the promise of the Son, who, when he came, not only showed us the Father, but promised yet *another* Comforter who should abide with us forever. The "Comforter" is a name equally applicable to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus saith Jehovah: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." (Isaiah lxvi. 13.) Men never questioned that the Lord was near when the Voice said: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." Here spoke the heart of the Father even before the Son came to teach us when we pray to say, "Our Father." The mission of the Son of God was that of a Comforter, as he declared that the Father sent not the Son into the world to

condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. After such a revelation of the Father, every true believer is comforted and is ready to exclaim with Paul: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." (2 Corinthians i. 3.) "Our comfort aboundeth through Christ," whose whole mission was to show us such a Father, to be himself another Comforter, and, leaving us, to promise us yet "another Comforter" who should never leave us. Thus we worship the God of all comfort—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each a Comforter and each speaking of another Person of the Holy Trinity as yet another Comforter.

God's glory does not consist in mystery, but in revelation and in the making himself known as the God of comfort and of "all comfort." "Comforter" really means "strengthener." The very root word is *fortis,* or *strong,* from which we get our words "fort" and "fortify." To comfort is to supply our need, to make us strong.

To comfort is not to take away our load, but to renew our strength, and so to carry us *and* our load also, declaring: "My grace is sufficient for thee." It is not to extinguish the fire, but to walk with us in the midst of the fire. No one knows the infinite resources in the Godhead who does not know God the Comforter. God is most real to us when most needed. Never was he more needed than by the apostles in the upper room as Christ made known to them his departure. Therefore our Lord said to them, Believe in God; believe also in me; believe also in the Holy Spirit, "another Comforter," who shall abide with you. If this is eternal life to believe in the Father and in Jesus Christ whom he sent, it is the fullness of eternal life when the Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ and reveals them unto us. "The world cannot receive him, for it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you." He is to be both an Advocate for us and a Companion with us.

The mission of the Holy Spirit is mediated by Jesus Christ. He comes to us out of the perfected and glorified manhood of Jesus Christ, "the promise of the Father," and as an assur-

ance of the acceptance of the atoning work of the Eternal Son. It was Jesus only who could baptize with the Holy Spirit. He comes not to teach new truth, for our Lord is our final and authoritative Teacher. But the Holy Spirit has a distinct mission as a Comforter or Strengthener, and that is to guide us into all the truth that Jesus had taught. Our souls need to be illumined as the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, even in our prayers, when we know not what we should pray for as we ought. This divine Advocate—one "called to our side"—can spiritualize our thoughts as well as interpret the things of God. He can take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, not as reminiscences or as posthumous influences, but as the very words which he received of the Father to make known to the disciples, but which they were so slow of heart to comprehend. There come mighty "tides of the Spirit," as well as of the ocean, to deepen the water on the bar and thus make possible the incoming of the great merchantmen of God. How many things would Christ have said by way of elaboration! but "ye are not able to bear them now." The Holy Spirit is ever preparing the way of the Lord. He has but one theme,

and that is Christ. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that God hath prepared for them that love him. Only the Spirit can make them known, for God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit. He comforts as he illumines and strengthens and guides. We are strengthened with power through the Spirit when Christ dwells in our hearts through faith. (Ephesians iii. 16, 17.)

With the Father a Comforter and the Son a Comforter, it was a necessary credential of the Holy Spirit that he should be "another Comforter" if he be divine. It was equally necessary that the Spirit should be the Holy Spirit and not simply the Great Spirit, such as the untutored Indian worships. After seeing the Son and the Father through the Son, goodness and holiness rather than might are necessary attributes of the Holy Spirit. Nor could he be another Comforter to the disciples after knowing Christ unless he were personal. Mere influence, however great and pervasive, even though proceeding from the Father and the Son, could not satisfy the disciples after their long and intimate personal relations and fellowship with Christ. If

the personal friendship of Christ is to be interrupted, they claimed personal friendship with the Holy Spirit. No body of sound doctrine, not even if it were all the truth which Christ had taught, could take the place of a gracious Personality such as Christ had been during the years of his incarnation. The Holy Spirit must come as a divine Presence. He must realize Christ's own promise in the very hour when the Holy Spirit was promised: "I will not leave you orphans; I come unto you." The Holy Spirit is Christ's other self. He will be known as "the Spirit of Christ."

John always presents the second coming of Christ not as a function of judgment, as do the Synoptists, but only as a spiritual power and presence to comfort believers. The power from on high which was promised is the perpetual presence of Christ. It was at once "the Holy Spirit" and "the Spirit of Jesus" that directed Paul to Troas, the nearest point whence he could sail for Europe. (Acts xvi. 7, 8.) Men early learned to say: "Where the Spirit is, there is the Church." They also taught: "Where the Spirit is, there is Christ." Paul so coördinates the efficacy of the exalted Christ and of the Holy

Spirit as that they seem one. "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Corinthians iii. 17.) "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Romans viii. 9.) We live our life through the Spirit, while at the same time Christ said: "Because I live, ye shall live also." By the abiding help and presence of the Spirit we are able to keep Christ's words; and our Lord declares: "If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Where the Holy Spirit is already we may expect to find the Father and the Son.

So unified were the voices of the Saviour and the Spirit that, while not strictly one voice, they seem inseparable. If the messages to the Seven Churches were written on Patmos at the command of Christ, who is the First and the Last, they are "what the Spirit saith unto the churches." When John hears the Lamb proclaim from heaven, "Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth," there is heard a sweet refrain, "Yea, saith the Spirit, that they

may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." The same Holy Spirit that helpeth our infirmities, when we know not what to pray for as we ought, fills us with those longings that only the Bride of Christ can know as "the Spirit and the Bride say, Come." Thus all that is done by the Holy Spirit is done in the unity of the Father and the Son, just as all that is done by the Son is done in the unity of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Together they said: "Let us make man, Let us redeem man, Let us comfort or strengthen man. He that knoweth the Son knoweth the Father also. If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Romans viii. 9.) "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Romans viii. 11.)

Thus the abode of the Spirit is the heart of the believer, which becomes a temple. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Holy Spirit?" In that sacred abode the Spirit not only talks to us, but talks *with* us. "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." How often have we heard his

still small voice saying to the teachings of Christ and his exceeding great and precious promises, "Yea, saith the Spirit!" Thus does he evermore take of the things of Christ and show them unto us. It was thus that the primitive Church sang:

> So Christ shall be our daily food,
> Our daily drink his precious blood;
> And thus the Spirit's calm excess
> Shall fill our souls with holiness.

We may no more have the mind of Christ than we can have the mind of the Spirit. The Spirit of life that dwells in us is also the Spirit of Christ that dwells in us. The voices that blend make known the truth as it is in Jesus. Nothing can seem good to the Holy Ghost and to us that does not seem good to Christ, who is Head over all things to the Church. The Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of holiness whereby Christ was raised from the dead, thus declaring that there was but one place for the holy, conquering Christ, shall also quicken our mortal bodies with the power of his resurrection. If Christ has gone to prepare a place for us, the Holy Spirit is preparing us for the place. To be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritually-minded is life and

peace. If therefore we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. His ceaseless mission is to conform us to the image of sons. He not only makes intercession for us according to the will of God, but teaches us so to prize his presence as to make us careful neither to grieve nor resist the Holy Spirit whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption. In Jude's brief epistle his chief warnings are against those who have not the Spirit. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." While there are diversities of gifts of the Spirit, his chief work has to do with character. It is not tongues that we should covet, for they shall cease. Prophecies, too, and knowledge shall be done away. But character, conformity to the image of Christ our Saviour as the Holy Spirit sheds love abroad in the heart—*that* shall abide forever.

Thus the Spirit becomes the preëminent Comforter, for he shall abide with you forever. Through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures—the Spirit's own work—we have hope. The Bible thus becomes a book for all time and

all men. "The germ of a martyr is in every soul that God has chosen for his abode." More and more the soul is fortified as by the Holy Spirit is given deeper knowledge of the things of God, and man is enabled to live more fully a life of faith by Him who is at once the Spirit of truth and the Spirit of faith. Thus is made true the promise of the Saviour: "I am come that they might have life, and might have it more and more." Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit we are brought to the full maturity of our powers. We do not then need again to "ask," to *"interrogate"* Christ, for the Spirit shows us the deep things of God. The secret of the Lord is with them that love him, and he will reveal them unto us by his Spirit. The promised Comforter is not of the nature of a substitute which excludes, but of a Companion who *secures the presence of Christ.* The Holy Spirit abides in no heart where the divine Christ is not also a welcome and an abiding Guest. (Ephesians iii. 16, 17.)

XIII

THE TRUE "LORD'S PRAYER" AT THE LORD'S TABLE

Weary of earth, and laden with my sin,
I look at heaven and long to enter in;
But there no evil thing may find a home,
And yet I hear a voice that bids me "Come!"

So vile I am, how dare I hope to stand
In the pure glory of that holy land?
Before the whiteness of that throne appear?
Yet there are hands stretched out to draw me near.

It is the voice of Jesus that I hear;
His are the hands stretched out to draw me near,
And his the blood that can for all atone,
And set me faultless there before the throne.

—*Samuel J. Stone.*

After-Song.

Through love to light! Oh wonderful the way
That leads from darkness to the perfect day!
From darkness and from sorrow of the night
To morning that comes singing o'er the sea.
Through love to light! Through light, O God, to thee,
Who art the love of love, the eternal light of light!

—*Richard Watson Gilder.*

"Conquering kings their titles take
From the foes they captive make;
Jesus by a nobler deed,
From the thousands he has freed."

XIII

THE TRUE "LORD'S PRAYER" AT THE LORD'S TABLE

Our Lord's table talk with men now becomes a face-to-face talk with the Father; and we scarcely know any change, save that we become *still* that we may the better know God and Jesus Christ whom he had sent. The Eleven had just made their confession of faith: "Now we know that thou knowest all things and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we know that thou comest forth from God." But what a revelation of God in Christ was yet to follow in this true "Lord's Prayer!" The one generally called so is the "Disciples' Prayer." Our Lord himself never prayed it, and one of its petitions he could not pray: "Forgive us our trespasses." If we would know the "Lord's Prayer," we must reverently listen as the door of the closet stands ajar, though secretly chosen for the sacred privacy of the Supper and his last and greatest table talk with his disciples. Never man spake like this man speaks to the Father. He assumes no atti-

tude of prayer, nor does he need to. It is his eternal attitude—the attitude of the Word who was "in the beginning with God," or literally, "*toward* God." His face was ever "toward God," as now, when he lifts up his eyes to heaven. He expected to be heard, for he had said at the tomb of Lazarus, "Thou hearest me always." He who ever liveth to make intercession for us, our High Priest who has entered within the veil, is now heard making his intercessory prayer, just such a prayer as he makes to-day, and evermore liveth to make. It is to such a prayer that we owe our spiritual life. "Because I live, ye shall live also." We gaze upon the very Holy of Holies as we hear Christ pray to the Father. Surely our High Priest is within! None can really know Jesus without hearing him pray. As Paul's prayers show him at his best, much more do Christ's. No wonder his disciples after one of his prayers said, "Lord, teach us how to pray." To hear the Lord pray in the upper room is the most sacred privilege of a disciple. It is like seeing the Son in the bosom of the Father, or at the Father's right hand—the place of privilege and of power. We stand with unsandaled feet in the antechamber of the upper room, where we hear

Christ at prayer. Having ceased to talk with men, he now talks with the Father.

One would think from the atmosphere of peace in that upper room that the agony in Gethsemane were already over. Christ had just said to his disciples: "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." It was of his peace that he gave and in this frame that he prayed, although Gethsemane awaited him that night, with the renewal of all the temptation in the wilderness. The last battle was not finished, but Christ had conquered in the war. Whatever awaited him, heaven was already in sight. There might be even a temporary hiding of the Father's face, but there was the abiding consciousness of the Father's love. "I will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on me; because he trusteth in me." It is not strange that brave John Knox when on his deathbed asked that some one read to him a chapter in the Bible. When asked, "What chapter?" he replied, "Either the seventeenth of John or one of the chapters of Ephesians." The soul is calmed by hearing holy men talk with God when

themselves about to see him face to face. Mature believers know that here in this chapter is gathered the ripest fruit of paradise. Melanchthon shortly before his death told how much he had visited this garden of the Lord when he said: "There is no voice which has ever been heard, either in heaven or earth, more exalted, more holy, more fruitful, more sublime, than this prayer offered up by the Son of God himself." No wonder that its language so deeply impressed the beloved disciple who lay in the bosom of his Lord as he heard him pray. Doubtless was fulfilled to John the promise, "The Holy Spirit shall bring all things to your remembrance," and so we have the words of the Son of God as he talked with the Father.

While this is the true "Lord's Prayer," prayed by Christ alone, yet there are two things in common with the "Disciples' Prayer" which he had taught them. One was "hallowed be thy name," which he taught them to pray, and "Father, glorify thy name," which Christ himself prayed. There can be no true prayer that does not hallow the name of God and glorify it. While in the "Disciples' Prayer" we say, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One,"

in the "Lord's Prayer" we hear him say, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the Evil One." It was not some vague and abstract thing from which our Lord asked deliverance for his disciples, but from the Evil One. Christ has come into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil, the god of this world that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Satan, the adversary, ever goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. We are not ignorant concerning his devices who have sought to resist the devil. Only his bond servants are so deceived as to question his very existence. One other prayer may be found in common although in different language. Thy kingdom will come when thy will is done on earth as it is done in heaven. So our Lord prays not only for his disciples but for all who may believe on him through their word. To this end Christ prays: "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth."

Our Lord's Prayer is mostly for his disciples. Out of the twenty-six verses, twenty-one are prayers for his disciples; and in the remaining five he is thinking of his finished work for "those

whom thou hast given me." The cross and the empty tomb are yet to come; but "the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou didst send me." Calvary and the resurrection should fix those words while the Holy Spirit would interpret them; but Christ's words were complete, save his seven sentences on the cross and the great commission. Life eternal had been made known to them if, with an insight which comes from a perfect spiritual sympathy, they now "know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." "And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." It was the longing of his soul for that home in the bosom of the Father which had been his from all eternity. The Eternal Son claims his own. His prayer may be summed up in one petition, which is at the same time the history of his incarnation, his passion, and his resurrection. Were the only fragment left of the New Testament one single verse in this seventeenth chapter of John—the nineteenth verse—it were enough to show that Christ had come into the

world: "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth." The breath of heaven is in that petition. To hear that alone shows that the Word was with God, ever "toward God," and was God.

While our Lord prays in behalf of his disciples for their unity, their preservation, and their consecration, his central petition is for their consecration as the condition of realizing the other petitions. To abide in Christ and to have his words abide in them was not only to show their unity with the true Vine, but to be kept alive and fruitful. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he may give it you." Their separation from the world and their consecration in the truth made possible the kingdom of God among men. Christ's chief work on earth was the building up of a believing fellowship and arranging for its perpetuity. The faith of the disciples not only varied during the days of his flesh, but in the early centuries according as

they laid stress on his divinity or on his perfect humanity. After his resurrection the human was almost lost in the divine. As Westcott says: "At first the conception of Christ's true divinity was shaped, and then that of his perfect manhood. Afterwards, in times of fierce conflict and passion, the gentler attributes of human nature were consecrated and at last confined in the type of a Saviour." It is as the Church hears the holy Son pray, "Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me," that we realize at once our Lord's holy humanity and his divinity. The Father has given him *the* name that is above every name—the name at which every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is the Christ to the glory of God the Father. It is the consecrated Christ who has made possible consecrated disciples.

What brought Christ to earth held him here until his work was done. To have left his work unfinished, even in his eager desire to return to the bosom of the Father, would have been to fail as Saviour. Whatever else Christ would have been, he could not have been the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Only by his passion could he become the full,

perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. Only by not seeking to save himself could he save others. A selfish Redeemer is something inconceivable. Selfishness is the foe of faith, whether a selfish disciple or a selfish Saviour. We shudder at the very thought of any selfishness in Christ, who has taught us that whosoever saveth his life shall lose it. We cannot tolerate selfishness in man, much less in the Saviour of men. He saves himself only as he saves others, and he saves others only as he gives himself for them, laying down his life for his sheep. Only by his blood we have the remission of our sins. Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end. They are not far wrong who find in selfishness the root of all sin. "Self-preservation is the first law of nature, self-sacrifice the first law of grace." Yes; but it is of our lower nature, the animal in us, that selfishness is the first law. "Selfishness is the bridge whereby we go back to the animal." Self-sacrifice is possible only by the grace of a Father who loves until he gives. The holiness of God is the attribute most concerned in keeping believers from evil. Therefore the holy Saviour prays: "For their sakes I con-

secrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in the truth." The sinless Saviour shows that he had no selfishness which vitiated his love. He was thus able to overcome as our File Leader in the faith. It was Christ's free surrender of himself unto death for us that is the ground of our sanctification in him.

"Sanctify them in the truth." "That they may be sanctified in the truth." The Holy Spirit is not the emotional Person in the Holy Trinity, as some vainly think. He is the Spirit of truth, and sanctifies us in the truth. The degree of our sanctification bears a close relation to our knowledge of the truth which the Holy Spirit gives us in the Scriptures. The more men saturate their minds with the thoughts of God's word, the freer the course of the Spirit in us and in our lives. "Now ye are clean through the words which I have spoken unto you." The truth of God is the great reality and sanctifying agency. It is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and is quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. So perfect was Christ's conformity to the word of God that he is the Word. "I am the Way, and the

Truth, and the Life." "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Men no more believe in the law of gravity than in the moral perfections of Jesus Christ. He is our spotless High Priest, who prayed for us on earth that we might be kept from the Evil One, and who ever liveth that he may make intercession for us. It was in the truth that our Lord consecrated himself for our sakes, that we might be sanctified or consecrated in the truth. The truth is God's ocean that no man can see across and no man has fathomed. It is enough for all the world in its infinite reaches and depth.

Men can believe in Christ who makes the intercessory prayer.

> I have heard many speak, but this one man—
> So anxious not to go to heaven alone,
> This one man I remember.

The passion of infinite love is in his prayer for others. He not only snatched the penitent malefactor from the cross to take him with him to paradise, but emptied the graves of the saints about Jerusalem for that bright cloud that re-

ceived him out of the sight of his apostles. Saintly Rutherford sent word to his little flock from his deathbed: "God is my witness that your heaven would make two heavens for me." It is ever so.

> He never finds who seeks his own,
> That soul is lost that's saved alone.

There could be no heaven save with an unselfish Christ. Hence the reach of his omnipotent prayer: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." That unselfish prayer is an omnipotent prayer. It has not an element of weakness in it. "Father, I *will*." It is more than petition or prayer. It is a claim, a right, a royal prerogative. It is the supreme will and claim of the conquering Son of God. Again, it is not for his sake but for ours that Christ prays that we may be with him and behold his glory. It is to be the completion of our own being as we become partakers of the divine nature. "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from

the Lord the Spirit." So declared an apostle, homesick at times with waiting. But the Lord himself declared on Patmos to his waiting Church: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Our Saviour on earth becomes our Host in heaven. At the marriage supper of the Lamb will be renewed and perfected the fellowship of Christ with all who looked for and hastened his appearing.

EPILOGUE

XIV

THE HIDDEN WORD; THE RIPENING OF ST. JOHN

"Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee."

"The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."

"Thy word is very pure: therefore Thy servant loveth it."

"Now ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you."

For if there be a further woe than such,
Wherein my brothers struggling need a hand,
So long as any pulse is left in mine,
May I be absent even longer yet,
Plucking the blind ones back from the abyss,
Though I should tarry a new hundred years!
—*Browning's "Death of John in the Desert."*

This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true.—*Epilogue to John's Gospel.*

EPILOGUE

XIV

THE HIDDEN WORD; THE RIPENING OF ST. JOHN

By the help of the hidden word the disciple becomes the saint. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light." The Fourth Gospel is preëminently the "Gospel of Conversations" of Jesus. Who would better remember and record them than the bosom friend of Jesus? The table companion at every meal, we naturally look to John to preserve for us the dinner parables and the matchless table talk in the upper room. Because Christ's words were hid in John's heart, the Holy Spirit the more readily called them to memory. We have in John's Gospel substantially the very words that Jesus gave his disciples, and doubtless the words which the Father had given him. The chosen spokesman of our Lord becomes not only the vehicle for bringing to us the gracious words of Christ, but also the best embodiment of these teachings in life and

character. To John, Christ was indeed the Word—the Word that was in the beginning ever "toward God," as if to receive and convey the very mind of God that when we had the mind of Christ we might see the Father also. How sacredly would John preserve every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God! He would live by *them,* and not by bread alone. Thus they bore the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

Doubtless John often recalled the words of the Psalmist and made them his own: "Thy words have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." John is not only the best fruit of our Lord's ministry, but he is the best exponent of our Lord's method in making a saint. "Now ye are clean through the words that I have spoken unto you," said Christ in his last table talk when speech and prayer so perfectly blended in the upper room. To lodge in prepared hearts the living words, and to water them with his blood that they might bring forth abundant fruit, was the object of our Lord's coming. His last words were for his own: "For I have given them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and

they have believed that thou didst send me. . . . I have given them thy word. . . . Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." As, like Mary, John kept and pondered in his heart all these words, his character became Christlike. His ripe old age showed the beauty of holiness —the perfecting of a saint.

The beloved disciple gives us the most perfect example of the grace of waiting and its perfect work. In his patience he won his soul. It was an heroic *achievement,* not simply a mere passive result. That last third of the life of John the aged was the ripening period, when its best fruit was matured. It was indeed "borrowed time" that he lived on, beyond the usual threescore and ten; but it seemed borrowed from eternity. John seemed to live in eternity for the last third of his life. Doubtless there is no true life that is not lived in eternity, whence we get our deepest motives and our highest inspirations. There can be no worthy aspirations which do not come from such inspirations. Few men wake up to the real meaning of life until the invisible begins to seem more real than the visible. John had reached that period when the fisherman is forgotten in the seer. If ever he had worshiped his net, as

men of affairs are so prone to do, his eagle eye now beholds the sea of glass, and the opened heavens show the great white throne of God. But far more awaited John than he saw on Patmos. A score or more of years, with their ripening influence, must come before he could write that immortal prologue of his Gospel or reproduce from the Holy of Holies our Lord's intercessory prayer. In the rugged Greek of the book of Revelation, written probably before the destruction of Jerusalem, John shows his 'prentice work as a writer. Many years needed to elapse before the finished style of the Fourth Gospel told of the mind that had pondered deeply the secret things of God; and as the Holy Spirit brought to John's remembrance all things that Jesus had spoken, his became the pen of a ready writer. John's Gospel could not have been written probably any earlier. The fruit must fully ripen. It needed also the memory of an *old* man to give the charming details of the Fourth Gospel.

Now, the waiting process was our Lord's method of maturing John's gifts and message. "If I will that he tarry till I come," Christ had indicated as the way in which his bosom friend

was to become his great spokesman until we can scarce distinguish the language of the Lord from that of his disciple. The very face of John, as the great masters paint it, shows some of the features of his Lord. If ever a brow deserved a halo, it would seem as if, next to Christ, John's is that brow. For nineteen centuries the Church has better understood Jesus by better knowing John. As Jesus dwelt in the bosom of the Father and made God known, so John, who rested so often reclining upon the bosom of Christ, has the better made Jesus known. In some sacred sense John became the "time exposure" of Jesus as Christ was the "time exposure" of the Father. How long a time was necessary to develop the divine-human image of Christ as John received it! Had John not been prepared through the grace of waiting, the Fourth Gospel could never have been given us to amaze the world by its serene and lofty vision of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. If Paul was caught up into the third heaven for his great vision, John witnessed heaven on earth as he was with Jesus in the holy mount of transfiguration, and when an exile on Patmos his Lord came to visit him. The last recorded vision of

Christ was not Stephen's or Paul's, but the one granted to the beloved disciple as our Lord was seen walking amid the golden candlesticks and giving his messages through John to the seven churches. This new vision was part of John's reward for waiting. It is true he became homesick on Patmos and longed for his release. It is pathetic to hear him cry, "Even so come, Lord Jesus," as Jesus said, "I come quickly." But the fresh vision on Patmos was the better to prepare him to write his great Gospel—probably his last work. It was the bloom of a century plant, and in it was the matured life of a hundred years. Its beauty and fragrance were to last until Jesus comes.

It was a test of John's quality that he *could* wait. "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen a God beside thee, who worketh for him that waiteth for him." (Isaiah lxiv. 4.) Paul loved to think on these words as he translates them: "What God hath prepared for them that love him." It is love that waits and that can wait. Love *possesses* what it waits for. John *had* eternal life. For "this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true

God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." God had put eternity in the heart of this man as he became a dwelling place of the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity. No wonder he writes: "Yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ"; "Beloved, *now* are we children of God"; "I have written unto you because ye *know* the Father." They had found the God who worketh for him that waiteth for him. God was not only faithful to cleanse them from sin, but to keep them from all unrighteousness. He is a God who both saves and strengthens. It needed not the tumultuous scenes of Patmos to assure John of the conquering Christ. John needed to see the Church aggressive, progressive, and triumphant for the sake not only of the seven churches of Asia for whom he wrote, but for all churches to the end of time. But his own was a serene faith born of the consciousness of the *keeping* power of Christ, who nearly threescore years before had committed his own mother to the disciple's keeping. He was able to keep both against that day. John could build his nest in stormy Jerusalem itself with a sublime courage born of an unquestioning and unhesitating faith.

Because the Word that was in the beginning with God and was God had become flesh and dwelt among us, and John had beheld his glory, he ever endured as seeing Him who was invisible. It would have been far easier to die for Jesus than to live for him. With Paul beheaded and Peter crucified and his own brother James long since dead by the sword of Herod, John doubtless grew lonely at times. But he *waited* to see the salvation of God, as aged Simeon had done before the birth of Christ, to find that the touch of Jesus makes death easy. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find waiting.

Now, unhappily, patience does not always have its perfect work with a soul compelled to wait. The intended grace of waiting may be turned into selfish complaining by those who do not yet understand by what fate they are to glorify God. Peter, with his unrestrained impulses, would have set us a sorry example, it is to be feared. "Lord, why cannot I follow thee even *now?*" was his honest wish for martyrdom who could not survive the trials of a single night. How long a time it took to ripen Paul, and by how much waiting in Arabia, in Tarsus, in

Cæsarea, and in Rome! Many years out of that life so full of tireless activities were spent in silent waiting even in prison before Paul could say, "I am now ready to be offered." We honor Martin Luther for his great work for religious liberty—a work that has given his name to an epoch and immortalized it in all history. Yet, worn with labors, Luther at sixty-three was impatient to be gone, and God took him. Some years before, when he wrote his will, he calls himself "a man well known in heaven, on earth, and in hell," but also "a poor, unworthy, miserable sinner, to whom the God of all mercies has intrusted the gospel of his dear Son and made him a teacher of his truth in spite of the Pope, the Emperor, and the Devil." None can question his devotion to Christ, in order for whose word to become pre-eminent he was willing that everything he himself had written should utterly perish. Doubtless allowance must be made for his strong, impulsive words, which burst forth at times like a mountain torrent as he would say: "I am utterly weary of life. I pray the Lord will come forthwith and carry me hence." The Electress Dowager, one day when Luther was dining with her, said to him: "Doctor, I wish you may

live forty years to come." "Madam," replied Luther, "rather than live forty years more, I would give up my chance of Paradise." Yet this was the man who wrote the Battle Hymn of the Reformation, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." In developed, symmetrical character how infinitely above Luther stands the bosom friend of Christ, nearly a century old, *waiting* his Lord's will! "If I will that he wait till I come, what is that to thee?"

How much it has meant to us to have a Gospel and three Epistles from the exile of Patmos long after his apocalyptic vision! Once so severe in his judgment of one who worshiped differently, what charitable views was he to take of Nicodemus and of Thomas as he writes: "Christ did not commit himself to men, for he knew what was in man. *But* there was a man named Nicodemus" whom Christ trusted, even though a ruler of the Jews. Thomas had put himself out of court by refusing to believe the testimony of his brethren and declaring that he would not believe the testimony of his own eyes. John shows him as finally making the sublimest confession of the divinity of his risen Lord that ever fell from human lips. John, who wanted to

call down fire from heaven on the Samaritan village before his Lord's passion, was to have the tongue of fire and the crown of flame which were to bless and not to curse his fellow-men. His became the gentleness of Christ to proclaim that God sent not his Son to condemn the world, but to save the world. Not Luke himself delighted more to tell of the mercy of Christ than did John as he tells of his blessing for the nameless woman who refused Christ a drink of water at Jacob's well, and of Peter restored to his apostleship.

John stands at the head of that new order of heroes that Christ came to create—the men that can wait. Never were they more needed than now. We need the faith and the experience that only age can give. "Long live the king!" the people cry as they hail the aged monarch whose wisdom has so often saved the State. Who is he that cometh after such a king? John, who grew greater and wiser with the years, seems to say:

"Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be—
The last of life, for which the first was made.
Our times are in His hand
Who saith: 'A whole I planned;
Youth shows but half. Trust God, see
All, nor be afraid.'"

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